United Nations E/HLPF/2018/1

Economic and Social Council

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High-level political forum on sustainable development
Convened under the auspices of the
Economic and Social Council*
9–18 July 2018
Item 1 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda

Provisional agenda and documentation

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies:[1]
   (a) Review of Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 17;
   (b) Thematic review;
   (c) Voluntary national reviews.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

Progress report on the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns

Summary of the sixth biennial high-level meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum

Reports of the regional forums on sustainable development

Discussion papers on the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, submitted by major groups and other stakeholders

* The high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, is item 6 of the agenda of the 2018 session of the Council. The ministerial meeting of the forum is sub-item (a) of item 5, High-level segment. The agenda of the 2018 session of the Council is contained in document E/2018/1.

[1] General Assembly resolution 70/299.

18-06863 (E) 250518

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Synthesis of voluntary submissions by functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums

Executive summaries of voluntary national reviews for the high-level political forum

Summary of the 2018 multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

Summary of the 2018 Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up

Report of the 2018 Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up

3. Adoption of the ministerial declaration.

4. Adoption of the report.

United Nations E/HLPF/2018/2

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High-level political forum on sustainable development
Convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council
9–18 July 2018
Item 2 of the provisional agenda*

Reports of the regional forums on sustainable development

Note by the Secretariat

1. In 2018, as in previous years, the regional commissions convened regional forums on sustainable development to contribute to the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Those forums were convened to respond to a number of mandates.

2. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012,[1] participants recognized how regional frameworks could complement and facilitate the effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action at the national level. They emphasized that regional and subregional organizations, including the regional commissions and their subregional offices, played a significant role in promoting the balanced integration and operationalization of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their respective regions.

3. In its resolution 67/290, the General Assembly decided on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. In the resolution, Member States continued to acknowledge the importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development. They invited the regional commissions to contribute to the work of the forum, including through annual regional meetings, with the involvement of other relevant regional entities, major groups and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate.

4. Similarly, the value of follow-up and review at the regional and subregional levels was recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[2] and Member States were encouraged to identify the most suitable regional forum in which to engage, so that such forums could contribute to the global follow-up and review process, including at the high-level political forum.

* E/HLPF/2018/1.
[1] See General Assembly resolution 66/288.
[2] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

18-07427 (E) 150518

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5. The dates and locations of the regional forums for 2018, as well as the symbols of the reports, are as follows:

(a) Economic Commission for Europe region, Geneva, 1 and 2 March (E/HLPF/2018/2/Add.1);

(b) Asia-Pacific region, Bangkok, 28–30 March (E/HLPF/2018/2/Add.2);

(c) Latin America and the Caribbean region, Santiago, 18–20 April (forthcoming);

(d) Arab region, Beirut, 24–26 April (forthcoming);

(e) Africa region, Dakar, 2–4 May (forthcoming).

6. The regional forums are generally organized in collaboration with partners of the regional commissions, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

United Nations E/HLPF/2018/2/Add.1

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High-level political forum on sustainable development
Convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council
9–18 July 2018

Report of the regional forum on sustainable development for the Economic Commission for Europe region on its second session

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat hereby transmits the report of the regional forum on sustainable development for the Economic Commission for Europe region on its second session, held in Geneva on 1 and 2 March 2018, to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

18-06710 (E) 180518

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Report of the regional forum on sustainable development for the Economic Commission for Europe region on its second session

I. Attendance

1. The second session of the regional forum on sustainable development for the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region was held at the International Conference Centre Geneva on 1 and 2 March 2018. The session was chaired by the Special Envoy for Global Sustainable Development of Switzerland, Michael Gerber.

2. The session was attended by representatives of the following 51 ECE member States: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

3. The following non-member State of ECE attended: Islamic Republic of Iran.

4. The European Union was represented by the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the European Union SWITCH to Green Facility, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee.

5. Representatives of the following United Nations departments, funds and programmes, specialized agencies, related organizations, conventions and initiatives attended the meeting: Convention on Biological Diversity, Environment Management Group, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, International Telecommunication Union, International Trade Centre, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN-Water, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Group, United Nations Development Programme, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office for Project Services, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Sustainable Development Goals Action Campaign, Sustainable Development Solutions Network, United Nations Volunteers, World Bank Group, World Health Organization and World Meteorological Organization.

6. Representatives of the following intergovernmental and regional organizations also took part in the session: Council of Europe, Council of Europe Development Bank, Council of the Baltic Sea States, Eurasian Economic Commission, International Energy Agency Clean Coal Centre, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development, Nordic Council of Ministers, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Organization of Islamic

Cooperation, Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus, Union for the Mediterranean, and United Cities and Local Governments.

7. Representatives of 110 non-governmental organizations and representatives of other organizations and independent experts also participated. A complete list of participants can be found on the website of the regional forum (https://www.unece.org/rfsd2018.html).

II. Opening and adoption of the agenda

8. The regional forum adopted the provisional agenda for the session, contained in document ECE/RFSD/2018/1.

9. In his opening remarks, the Chair of the regional forum emphasized that the forum served as a regional space to share policy solutions, best practices and challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Interaction among the participants was essential in order to achieve practical value added and peer learning. Some of the challenges faced by the countries of the ECE region were different, but many were also similar. The regional forum therefore presented an opportunity to find common ground for ways to move forward.

10. The President of the Economic and Social Council pointed to new economic and technological opportunities, as well as to rising inequalities in many countries, which were undermining social cohesion and participation. Crucial international frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda, directly addressed those pressing global challenges. There was a need to work together multilaterally to achieve the goals set in the frameworks. The Economic and Social Council and its system, including the high-level political forum on sustainable development, had a key role to play in that regard.

11. Addressing participants through a video message, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations welcomed the engagement of the middle-income and advanced countries of the ECE region in the regional forum, which reflected the universal character of the 2030 Agenda. The regional forum provided an opportunity for an exchange of views on different approaches and for addressing transboundary matters among a variety of partners. The close collaboration among ECE and the other regional United Nations entities in organizing the regional forum was carried out in the spirit of current efforts to reposition the United Nations development system.

12. The ECE Executive Secretary expressed her satisfaction with the increased interest in the regional forum. She underscored that the topics of the round tables represented the core areas of the expertise of ECE, areas that were insufficiently covered by the United Nations development system. ECE was ready to contribute its expertise and convening power to help fill those gaps. ECE was very pleased with the cooperation with the other members of the United Nations family in the region. Working as the United Nations system towards an even greater impact and fully utilizing the potential for collaboration among member States, civil society, international organizations, the private sector and academia were essential for progress to be made.

13. The Chair of the Regional United Nations Development Group Team for Europe and Central Asia pointed out that progress on the Sustainable Development Goals in the region had been accelerated through participation, streamlined policy planning, innovation, alternative financing for the Goals and a more defined role for the private sector. In addition, much-needed reviews of statistical capacities and systems had

taken place. Nevertheless, many countries in the region were facing complex challenges. The joint work and coordination undertaken regionally within the United Nations system in Europe and Central Asia was recognized as a model of cooperation. Inter-agency mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support strategy missions were an example of partnership-based approaches that directly addressed the needs of the host country.

III. High-level policy segment: transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies in the Economic Commission for Europe region

14. The Chair of the regional forum moderated the high-level policy segment. The following high-level and other representatives made interventions during the segment: Gramoz Ruçi, Speaker of the Parliament, Albania; Tudor Ulianovschi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Republic of Moldova; Marianna Shchetkina, Deputy Chair of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly, National Coordinator on Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, Belarus; Ashot Hovakimian, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Armenia; Aidin Sharipbekov, State Secretary of the Ministry of the Economy, Kyrgyzstan; Franc Matjaž Zupančič, State Secretary, Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, Slovenia; Andrius Krivas, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations in Geneva; Zbigniew Czech, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations in Geneva; Didier Chambovey, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the World Trade Organization and the European Free Trade Association; Ivan Ivanisevic, Director General for Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Montenegro; Galit Cohen, Senior Deputy Director General, Planning, Policy and Strategy, Ministry of Environmental Protection, Israel; Huseyn Huseynov, Head of Department for Sustainable Development, Ministry of the Economy, Secretary of the National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development, Azerbaijan; Annika Lindblom, Counsellor, Ministry of the Environment, Secretary-General of the National Commission on Sustainable Development, Finland; and Anne-Mareike Vanselow, Desk Officer, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany.

15. The following high-level representatives from intergovernmental organizations made interventions: Dragana Filipovic, Ambassador, Permanent Observer of the Council of Europe to the United Nations Office at Geneva; and Nedret Emiroglu, Deputy Regional Director, World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe.

16. Civil society organizations conveyed to the regional forum the outcome of a preparatory civil society consultation that took place on 28 February 2018. The civil society positions were presented by Anja Andrea Frydensberg Pedersen, YouAct — European Youth Network on Sexual and Reproductive Rights.

17. A keynote address on evidence-based policymaking for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was delivered by Peter Messerli, Professor of Sustainable Development, University of Bern, and Co-Chair of the group of independent scientists appointed to draft the Global Sustainable Development Report.

18. The Chair's summary, contained in the annex to the present report, outlines the main issues raised at the regional forum. Written statements are available on the website of the forum.

IV. Peer learning segment

19. The Secretary of the regional forum provided an overview of the round tables, which constituted the peer learning segment of the forum. The forum had before it a compilation of case studies (ECE/RFSD/2018/INF1).

20. To facilitate practical and targeted peer learning, the segment was structured into two sets of five parallel round tables, covering Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15, which will be the subject of in-depth reviews at the high-level political forum in 2018. Peer learning and interactive discussions were facilitated by the presentation of case studies with practical solutions and specific approaches to achieve progress in a certain area of the Goals. Informal concept notes for all the round tables and summaries of the case studies are available on the website of the regional forum. The Chair's summary, contained in the annex to the present report, sets out the main challenges, policy responses and measures discussed at each round table.

A. First set of round tables

1. Sustainable water: making universal access to water and sanitation a reality in the Economic Commission for Europe region

21. The round table was moderated by Oliver Schmoll, Programme Manager, Water and Climate, European Centre for Environment and Health, WHO Regional Office for Europe. The rapporteur was Peter Kovacs, Head of the River Basin Management and Water Protection Department, Ministry of the Interior, Hungary, and Chair of the Bureau of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention). Case studies were presented or submitted by France, Portugal, Romania, Serbia and the European Environment and Health Youth Coalition.

2. Sustainable energy: improving the efficiency of the energy system

22. The round table was moderated by Scott Foster, Director, Sustainable Energy Division, ECE. The rapporteur was Antonela Solujic, Head of the Department for Energy Efficiency, Ministry of Mining and Energy, Serbia, and Vice-Chair of the ECE Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency. Case studies were presented or submitted by Germany, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine.

3. Sustainable cities and communities: financing the transition to sustainable cities and communities — challenges and opportunities

23. The round table was moderated by Marco Kamiya, Coordinator, a.i., Urban Economy and Finance Branch, UN-Habitat, and Krista Kampus, Senior Adviser and Head of the Sustainable Development Unit — Baltic 2030, Council of the Baltic Sea States. The rapporteur was Damegul Kabiyeva, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the United Nations in Geneva. Case studies were presented or submitted by the Council of Europe Development Bank, Belgium (region of Flanders), Czechia, Glasgow City Council and Italy.

4. Sustainable consumption and production: successful approaches to delivering on sustainable consumption and production by 2030

24. The round table was moderated by Marco Keiner, Director, Environment Division, ECE, and Charles Arden-Clarke, head of the secretariat of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns,

Economy Division, UNEP. The rapporteur was Andrea Innamorati, Senior Policy Adviser, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy. Case studies were presented or submitted by Kazakhstan, Latvia, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland.

5. Sustainable forests and ecosystems: sustainable forest management and the Sustainable Development Goals

25. The round table was moderated by Thomas Haussmann, Senior Officer, Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Germany. The rapporteur was Christoph Dürr, International Forest Policy Adviser, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland. Case studies were presented or submitted by Austria, the European network INTEGRATE, Finland, IKEA, Kazakhstan and Poland.

B. Second set of round tables

1. Sustainable water: sharing water — balancing competing needs in a context of declining resources

26. The round table was moderated by Stefan Uhlenbrook, Coordinator, World Water Assessment Programme, UNESCO. The rapporteur was Peter Kovacs, Head of the River Basin Management and Water Protection Department, Ministry of the Interior, Hungary, and Chair of the Bureau of the Water Convention. Case studies were presented or submitted by Germany, Finland, Hungary, Serbia, Switzerland and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

2. Sustainable energy: transforming energy in support of the 2030 Agenda

27. The round table was moderated by Ulrich Benterbusch, Deputy Director, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy, Germany, and Aleksandar Dukovski, Senior Energy Expert and Chair, ECE Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency. The rapporteur was Iva Brkic, Energy Expert, Permanent Mission of Croatia to the United Nations in Geneva. Case studies were presented or submitted by the Centre for Promotion of Sustainable Development (Serbia), Czechia, Kazakhstan and Spain.

3. Sustainable cities and communities: promoting resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements

28. The round table was moderated by Adam Banaszak, Committee of the Regions, European Union. The rapporteur was Franc Matjaž Zupančič, State Secretary, Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, Slovenia. Case studies were presented or submitted by Kyrgyzstan, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Province of Potenza (Italy), the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus, the Russian Federation and Serbia.

4. Sustainable consumption and production: towards a circular economy — innovation for sustainable value chains

29. The round table was moderated by Charles Arden-Clarke, head of the secretariat of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, Economy Division, UNEP, and Geoffrey Hamilton, Acting Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, ECE. The rapporteur was Andrea Innamorati, Senior Policy Adviser, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy. Case studies were presented or submitted by Czechia, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Republic of Moldova and Slovenia.

5. Sustainable forests and ecosystems: biodiversity at the heart of sustainable development — towards transformation and resilience

30. The round table was moderated by Cristiana Paşca Palmer, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity. The rapporteur was Christoph Dürr, International Forest Policy Adviser, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland. Case studies were presented or submitted by Georgia, Poland and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

V. Connecting the dots: sustainable resource management and lifestyles in the region

31. The segment on "connecting the dots: sustainable resource management and lifestyles in the region", featured the presentation of reports from the round tables by the seven rapporteurs. The reporting was followed by an interactive discussion on the linkages between the various Sustainable Development Goals and their operationalization for more integrated policymaking. The annex to the present report contains a summary of the discussion and its main conclusions by the Chair of the forum.

VI. Closing

32. In her closing remarks, the ECE Executive Secretary expressed her hope that the ideas and suggestions exchanged at the regional forum would spur action and accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the countries and the region. She underscored the importance of different actors and partners engaging in meaningful discussions at the regional forum.

33. Taking stock of progress so far, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva saw a mixed picture of implementation of the Goals. The magnitude of the challenges had yet to be met by the pace of actions. The regional forum demonstrated the vital role that regional actors played in the necessary transformation. It was also a laboratory of ideas, strategies and best practices with applicability for the region and for the world beyond. For the outcomes of the regional forum to take root, the Director-General invited participants to look at Geneva as the operational heart of the international system. A key convener to leverage and amplify Geneva's collective expertise was the Office's sustainable development goals laboratory.

34. Delivering closing remarks on behalf of civil society, the Vice-President of the European Disability Forum stressed a number of key messages referring to the topics of the peer learning round tables. He reaffirmed that civil society organizations stood ready to support member States and ECE in building an inclusive, sustainable and prosperous world, with the ultimate goal of ending poverty, protecting the planet, including persons with disabilities and leaving no one behind.

35. Before closing the meeting, the Chair informed participants that the draft report of the regional forum, including the Chair's summary of the discussions, would be circulated for comments by participants. The final version would constitute the official input from the ECE region to the high-level political forum to be held in New York from 9 to 18 July 2018.

Annex

Chair's summary of the discussions

High-level policy segment: transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies in the Economic Commission for Europe region

1. The high-level policy segment provided an opportunity to take stock of progress and challenges and exchange views on major factors influencing implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the region. In addition, participants considered the impact of voluntary national reviews on implementation of the Goals. The discussions also touched upon the critical role of science in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

How to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: coordination, coherence and partnerships

2. Sustainable development requires addressing significant challenges through integrated solutions based on new models of production and consumption. There is no single recipe for this, and different alternatives are possible. The interconnected character of the 2030 Agenda provides new policy spaces and potential pathways for implementation.

3. The universality of the Sustainable Development Goals means that they are relevant for all countries. Given the linkages between the different challenges and the external spillovers of domestic actions, the initiatives of a few sustainability champions are not sufficient for success. In this context, where the domestic and foreign impacts of policies are difficult to separate, international cooperation acquires an increased importance.

4. Governments at all levels have the ultimate responsibility to lead the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but all stakeholders have to contribute so as to ensure rapid and effective progress. The important role of international organizations in providing various types of expertise was also acknowledged.

5. The involvement of civil society is essential for engaging in partnerships, giving visibility to issues that might receive insufficient attention and exploring a range of alternative policy options. Civil society organizations argued that a rights perspective was necessary in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, so that all groups, including women, persons with disabilities, youth, older persons, migrants and others, had their rights upheld.

6. The 2030 Agenda provides a global and universal road map, which serves not only as a signpost for changes at the national level but also as a vehicle for effective cooperation on sustainable development with other countries. Some countries, like Lithuania, have reformed their development cooperation policies to better support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. Building coherence between national and global policies and, more specifically, identifying the global impact of national actions, are critical challenges for the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region. Despite the progress observed so far, it was acknowledged that this was an ongoing process. The importance of regional cooperation for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals was stressed, in particular because many Goals and targets had a transboundary dimension.

8. Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals has been linked to national development strategies and, in some countries, is closely related to the

European Union integration agenda, such as in Montenegro. Middle-income countries share common problems and challenges, as reflected in the conclusions of the recent regional Sustainable Development Goals coordination leaders forum (Minsk, 21–23 February 2018). This group of countries has particular needs, which should be acknowledged, and requires the support of United Nations organizations and international financial institutions. Mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support strategy missions were mentioned as useful tools.

9. In many countries, interministerial coordination mechanisms have proven to promote policy coherence, solve possible policy conflicts, increase awareness among ministries about the 2030 Agenda, ensure equal responsibility of all departments for its implementation and promote a long-term partnership with all stakeholders.

10. Some participants also stressed the need to involve different levels of government. In some countries, such as in Belarus, subnational groups on the Sustainable Development Goals have been created. Local authorities are key players in achieving many of the Goals. However, they need to be empowered through decentralization policies and enabled through capacity-building tools. The diversity observed in the experiences related to cities is a source of comparative knowledge that can help shape policies at other levels of governance.

11. The role of parliaments in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was strongly emphasized. Parliaments approve new legislation and exert control over governments, including on budgetary matters. They can guide government's work on the basis of annual implementation reports. The involvement of parliaments has led in some countries, like Albania, to the creation of specific structures, such as the designation of focal points for the Sustainable Development Goals in each parliamentary committee in order to provide an effective oversight of activities related to the Goals or the creation of subcommittees focused on specific Goals. Interparliamentary cooperation could contribute effectively to the exchange of experiences.

12. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will not be possible without strengthening the effectiveness of the State. Improving the quality of laws and their application and increasing the efficiency of public institutions, including by breaking down silos, would increase the ability of governments at all levels to ensure coherent and effective implementation. This would also have positive effects on social acceptance and trust by citizens.

13. It should be acknowledged that the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals is a process that will take many years. This time dimension calls for strategic considerations, including the identification of priorities and the sequencing of actions. The urgency of the challenges ahead creates a limited window of opportunity to intervene, so action needs to start immediately.

14. Interventions in some particular areas may accelerate implementation of the Goals. Advancing gender equality would have a broad and positive impact on the 2030 Agenda. Digitalization and innovation, including new institutional arrangements, can be important factors facilitating progress, as emphasized by Armenia, Israel and Kyrgyzstan.

15. In addition, trade, which has been identified as a means of implementation in the 2030 Agenda, has acquired an increased policy relevance. The challenge is how best to use trade to support economy-wide development and structural transformation towards products with high added value. To exploit the potential of trade for positive change, it is important to ensure coherence between trade and policies in other areas, so that they are mutually supportive. This whole-of-government approach should cut across policy domains and institutional divisions, as is being done in the Republic of Moldova.

16. The importance of data for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals was stressed by many participants. Data should be disaggregated, including by gender, age, geographic area, disability, income level and others factors, to track the situation of particular groups, including migrants, persons with disabilities and others. Participants presented experiences on how online follow-up mechanisms can enable a multi-stakeholder discussion on the progress made, on gaps and on prospects for future development, as is being done, for example, in Finland.

17. Appropriate financing embedded in budgetary processes and long-term financial planning is necessary for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The inclusion of sustainable development considerations in the State budget at all levels is a key step in mainstreaming the Goals into all sectoral policies and the allocation of financial resources. In some countries, ministries have to consider their policies, initiatives and resource demands from a perspective that takes into account the Goals. Besides domestic public resources, other sources of financing need to be mobilized, including private sector and external financing.

Contribution of voluntary national reviews to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

18. Robust and efficient monitoring and review mechanisms are key for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. There is a need to keep track of what has been achieved and identify areas where more and faster progress is required. Voluntary national reviews were assessed as effective instruments by countries that have already made presentations at the high-level political forum.

19. Voluntary national reviews are useful in different ways, including raising awareness among stakeholders, promoting ownership among different ministries, understanding the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda and fostering coordination and cooperation to monitor progress.

20. Carrying out voluntary national reviews has been closely connected with the preparation and implementation of development strategies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as was the case in Slovenia. These reviews can function as a trigger for establishing the overall mechanisms and policies for implementation while keeping up the momentum for action. Moreover, the reviews serve to identify priorities and to focus on the adaptation of the Sustainable Development Goals to local, subnational and national contexts.

21. One of the key lessons of the voluntary national reviews shared by participants is the importance of the way in which the reviews are prepared. The preparation of these reviews has often triggered extensive consultations, as was the case in Switzerland, involving representatives of ministries and other state institutions, as well as representatives of local and subnational governments, non-governmental organizations, local communities, the private sector, professional organizations and academia. The reviews can also contribute to increasing awareness and ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals, supported by communication campaigns and the organization of thematic events, as in France. This is critical, since the Goals, and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, rely on the mobilization of all actors.

22. Participatory models in the preparation of the voluntary national reviews are sometimes supported by the creation of task forces and the appointment of thematic coordinators for each Sustainable Development Goal, as in Poland. In some cases, a wide range of stakeholders has been included, together with the Government, in advisory bodies. Some countries, like Germany, have offered part of the presentation slot for their review at the high-level political forum to non-State actors. A whole-of-government approach should be combined with a whole-of-society one.

Importance of scientific evidence

23. Reaching a broad consensus on what needs to be done is facilitated when proposed actions are backed up by scientific evidence. Science of all disciplines can provide a better understanding of the linkages, synergies and trade-offs between different Goals and targets, and clear, evidence-informed recommendations for effective implementation. It can offer solutions and innovations to respond to global challenges. It also facilitates the identification of factors that are driving major trends and their impact.

24. The ability to advance in particular areas or launch specific initiatives depends on two factors. The first factor is the existence of uncontested evidence supporting action. This factual certainty contributes to generating consensus, but it is not sufficient. The second factor is a high degree of societal agreement. Interventions are harder in areas where there is a lack of both sufficient knowledge and social support. There is therefore a need to increase the knowledge base all over the world, including through the creation of experimental spaces for learning and sufficient funding for basic and applied research. Strong multi-stakeholder partnerships are critical to both develop these spaces and widen the social acceptance for implementation.

Peer learning segment

First round table on sustainable water (Goal 6): making universal access to water and sanitation a reality in the Economic Commission for Europe region

25. The 2030 Agenda reaffirms the commitments regarding the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation. Sustainable Development Goal 6 stipulates an integrated approach to water resources management and the provision of water and sanitation services. The ECE region is still far from reaching universal and equitable access to safe water and sanitation for all. Despite progress made in the past decades, inequities in access persist. Aggregated data frequently masks inequalities. There remain large urban/rural disparities, unaddressed affordability issues and problems of access in specific settings such as schools, hospitals and prisons. In addition, marginalized population groups such as minorities, rural women, persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees require increased attention.

26. Problems are particularly acute in rural areas, where about three quarters of the people without basic access to water live. The situation for sanitation is even worse. In schools, toilets often do not meet the needs of pupils and in particular adolescent girls, affecting their learning, dignity and well-being. Inadequate water and sanitation services or poor hygiene increase the risk of infections and negatively affect school attendance. In addition to access, the quality and safety of water and sanitation services requires serious policy attention. Challenges related to affordability of services are also of growing concern. In some countries of the ECE region, poor households are likely to spend over 3 per cent of total expenditures on water and sanitation.

27. Policy solutions to address affordability may include both tariff-related and non-tariff-related instruments. Social tariffs can be a good instrument to overcome affordability issues for lower-income households. However, choosing the best method for funding social tariffs and identifying beneficiaries are challenging tasks. In most low-income households, the affordability issue is not limited to water and sanitation services and therefore mechanisms that tackle poverty in an integrated manner are necessary.

28. Water and sanitation infrastructures are lacking or deteriorating in parts of the region and are in need of repair and maintenance; capital investment needs are

therefore high. Water tariffs are often not adequate to cover maintenance costs. Tariff collection rates are often negatively affected by poor services resulting from deteriorating infrastructure, which may cause financial problems. Overall, financing and investment remain largely below the level needed to address water and sanitation challenges in the region.

29. Effective action requires bringing together different sectors and working across various policy areas (environment, health, education and others). Better governance processes and the involvement of stakeholders at various levels result in improved access to safe and equitable services.

30. Water and sanitation services are frequently provided at the local level and therefore local stakeholders, including civil society organizations, need to be fully involved. Local governments should be empowered to implement nationally defined policies on affordability. Civil society organizations drew attention to the limitations of privatization of water provision and called for strengthening of public ownership and regulation.

31. Public participation and access to information are essential elements of decision-making. All concerned groups need to be included when developing plans and policies for improving infrastructure and achieving universal and equitable access.

32. A unique feature of the pan-European region is the existence of legally binding instruments (the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and its Protocol on Water and Health) to support the implementation of Goals 6 and 3 and other water-related Goals and targets. These regional instruments lead to the establishment of national targets and action plans and provide platforms for sharing experiences. The Protocol explicitly calls for ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation to promote health and well-being for all. It promotes self-assessment of the situation of access to water and sanitation through an equity lens. Outcomes of such assessments have proven to put the issue higher on the political agenda and foster policy development.

33. The European Union Water Initiative supports countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in setting and implementing national targets and ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation. This support is coordinated through intersectoral and inter-agency platforms.

Second round table on sustainable water (Goal 6): sharing water — balancing competing needs in a context of declining resources

34. Water scarcity is becoming more acute, even in previously water-rich countries, owing to climate change and growing water use, including increasing water demand for irrigation in agriculture. This causes heavy economic impacts on all sectors, strong water competition and environmental challenges.

35. Reduced flows can also imply degrading water quality, notably through concentration of pollutants such as nutrients. Quality is also threatened by the complex chemical environment, including from modern lifestyles and the use of cosmetics, drugs and cleaning and plastic products. Countries are adjusting and updating the legal and regulatory requirements to address these emerging challenges and facilitate a more efficient use of water (e.g. regarding micropollutants or water reuse).

36. The fact that most water resources in the ECE region are shared across borders brings additional challenges in balancing water uses, allocating water and addressing water scarcity at a transboundary level. In this context, the lack of common data for a shared understanding and of jointly agreed assessment methodologies to form the

basis for water sharing, as well as legal and information gaps, create additional difficulties.

37. For more than 20 years the Water Convention has supported integrated water resources management and the peaceful and sustainable use of shared resources. Specific regulations in line with the Convention can be adopted to address challenges such as water allocation and scarcity at the transboundary level.

38. Cost recovery and appropriate technologies for saving water are very important in reducing water use, especially in agriculture, in the most water-scarce parts of the region. Water recycling and reuse, as well as nature-based solutions such as natural water retention, are also crucial in dealing with water scarcity. The repair and upgrading of ageing water infrastructure provide an opportunity to introduce changes, such as multi-purpose use of hydropower reservoirs and improving efficiency and safety of water distribution. New technological solutions are needed to increase water efficiency and improve water quality, and available technologies should be employed more widely.

39. Solutions to water problems often go beyond the realm of the water sector. It is therefore vital to find synergies with other sectors and to adopt an integrated/nexus perspective when evaluating actions by considering the impacts of measures in various sectors and their interaction. There are numerous common benefits from such an integrated approach, for example increasing energy efficiency can also raise water use efficiency, and vice versa.

40. At the same time, when such interlinkages are not properly assessed there are risks for sustainability as, for example, concerning the impacts for water use, water quality and hydromorphology if effects from energy production, including of biofuels, are not taken into account. Renewable energy development is becoming more sustainable, including through international guidance and intersectoral dialogues. Regarding water quality, preventing pollution (which requires cooperation with other sectors such as agriculture and industry) is more effective than treatment. What constitutes wastewater for one particular user can be a resource for another user, thus contributing to dealing with water scarcity.

41. The private sector is not only a partner in financing, but it can also play a key role in implementation. Companies are progressively adopting more sustainable approaches, as they are becoming increasingly aware of the business risks associated with water scarcity. However, the action of regulators continues to be necessary.

First round table on sustainable energy (Goal 7): improving the efficiency of the energy system

42. Improvements in energy efficiency can play a role in meeting climate objectives, ensuring energy security, enhancing quality of life and improving economic performance. Although the benefits of energy efficiency initiatives are evident, there is a low level of awareness of their positive impact across a range of indicators. This demands additional efforts by policymakers, businesses and other stakeholders to implement energy efficiency projects.

43. Provision of energy services in buildings must ensure the welfare of their occupants, including health and comfort aspects, while being attentive to energy poverty and gender dimensions. Improving energy efficiency can play an important role in addressing these concerns.

44. Participants proposed a number of options to raise energy efficiency. For large-scale energy efficiency projects, cooperation between authorities at the national and local levels, industry and local communities is indispensable in making them economically viable. Multiple benefits need to be taken into account, for example the

positive impacts on pollution and health, so that social returns on public interventions are properly assessed.

45. A well-developed programme of financial incentives for households could increase implementation of energy efficiency measures in the residential sector. A public fund for energy efficiency can provide funding for pilot projects that have the potential to be scaled up and can be used to leverage significant financial flows. Information and awareness campaigns for the general public may be one of the most cost-effective ways to improve energy efficiency in the residential sector. Education programmes would improve the understanding of energy efficiency benefits.

46. Significant improvements in industrial energy efficiency are possible with the introduction of sound business models. There is a need to develop proper instruments to incentivize retrofitting and renovation of outdated and inefficient infrastructure in accordance with modern standards.

47. Initiatives such as reducing market barriers to sustainable energy technology and deployment of standards such as the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings can bring real benefits. Normative instruments, as well as audits, energy management systems, proper measurement and verification, incentives and, as needed, fines, are practical measures to promote energy efficiency.

48. The energy system remains dominated by fossil fuels and stronger efforts are needed to decarbonize the economy. Energy prices should reflect the full costs of energy production and use, including externalities such as greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. This could be done, for example, through carbon markets or carbon taxes. These prices would promote sustainable management of energy resources and accelerate the uptake of energy efficiency and clean energy technologies.

49. The use of energy subsidies should be rationalized while exploring alternative ways to protect vulnerable groups. Subsidies that stimulate energy production and consumption should be replaced by instruments that encourage investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy. Monitoring and reporting on progress in achieving the targets of Goal 7 is critical for the necessary mid-course adjustments.

50. Information and communications technology opens new perspectives for energy system integration and resilience (including notably the introduction of intermittent renewables), urban management and empowerment of consumers, with positive implications for energy efficiency. However, cybersecurity issues also raise some concerns.

51. International cooperation and exchange of experiences among countries is crucial to accelerate improvements in energy efficiency. The Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction is an example of such cooperation to improve building energy performance. Participants also emphasized the important role ECE plays as a platform for identification and exchange of best practices.

Second round table on sustainable energy (Goal 7): transforming energy in support of the 2030 Agenda

52. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda poses a number of transformational challenges for the energy sector. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is also required to honour the commitments in the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Currently, the energy sector is a major polluter. However, in the short term the continued reliance on fossil fuels in the total primary energy supply of all ECE member States is a reality. Policymakers and the industry should cooperate to look for alternatives and take immediate steps to deploy transformative technologies that will reduce the carbon footprint of the energy sector and increase systemic and resource efficiencies.

53. Changing the energy mix towards cleaner sources of energy can play a role in the decarbonization of the energy system. Natural gas is less harmful to the environment compared with other fuels. Liquefied natural gas plays an important role in ensuring security and diversification of supplies. Participants discussed how trucks could be used to ship liquefied natural gas to remote or isolated communities, thus improving access to affordable and modern energy services. Transporting liquefied natural gas by truck could set the stage for the development of a future zero-carbon hydrogen infrastructure. In the Eurasian Economic Union, there are plans to create a common gas market by 2025, which would greatly contribute to better access to cleaner energy.

54. The change in the energy mix to reduce carbon emissions may take other forms. A case study was presented where the decline of coal-fired power generation may be accompanied by the construction of new nuclear units with zero carbon dioxide emissions. In addition, high-efficiency, low emission technologies would be introduced to improve the stability and reliability of the electricity system and facilitate deployment of renewable energy technologies. However, a shift towards increased reliance on nuclear energy remains highly controversial. Civil society organizations drew attention to the associated risks, including those from nuclear waste.

55. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas and therefore reducing methane leakage would contribute to climate mitigation efforts. Appropriately managed coal mine methane can enhance mine safety and reduce the carbon footprint of primary energy production. Coal mine methane that would otherwise be vented into the atmosphere and contribute to global warming can be used as a clean fuel for power, heating or domestic uses. The problem of methane leakage can also be present in abandoned coal mines and non-producing coal fields. This infrastructure could therefore also be used in countries moving away from the use of coal and could be combined with advanced coal gasification technologies.

56. Decarbonization can be supported by an enabling policy and regulatory environment fostering the emergence of innovative business models and technological solutions. Policies can provide financial incentives and promote technology transfer in support of a more rapid shift towards a low-carbon energy system, including by contributing to scaling up cleaner low-carbon technologies and, in particular, renewable sources of energy.

57. Productive, equitable and meaningful participation of women at all levels in the development of the future sustainable energy system is necessary. Professional women need networks that facilitate their engagement in energy policy decision-making, so that women can contribute more actively to the structural transformation of the energy industry.

58. Effective communication with all relevant stakeholders is important in managing this transition and facilitating the emergence of cleaner technologies. There is a strong need to base policy decisions on available scientific evidence, which should provide a critical input when assessing different options.

First round table on sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11): financing the transition to sustainable cities and communities — challenges and opportunities

59. Governments design and implement a variety of programmes to support vulnerable population groups that cannot compete in housing markets with more well-off groups. International financial institutions provide resources to the Governments of countries with economies in transition to complement their efforts in the provision of affordable housing. These resources can be used to subsidize mortgages, provide grants or finance large-scale investment projects for urban renewal.

60. Regional and local authorities play an important role in financing urban renewal and adequate housing. In particular, they provide the necessary strategic visions, promote intersectoral cooperation and establish multi-stakeholder platforms. The promotion of smart and sustainable cities would benefit from stronger municipal budgets and an expansion of local revenue.

61. Public funding is very limited and therefore should be used for programmes reflecting the needs of the population, including various groups (youth, older persons, families, persons with disabilities). The active involvement of urban residents from all stakeholder groups is necessary, so that public authorities and developers promote local public interests.

62. The private sector is a major source of housing and urban development financing. Competition between private sector organizations would lower housing and infrastructure costs, while keeping habitability standards, thus increasing affordability. Public policies should therefore ensure a competitive environment. Effective public-private partnerships means reconciling the need to attract private financing with a continued focus on inclusiveness and peoples' needs.

63. Bridging the financial gap between insufficient public funds and large-scale needs in building and renewing urban infrastructure requires innovative solutions that are developed with the involvement of all key stakeholders. Some of the initiatives discussed included: a grant competition for cities to develop sustainable urban renewal projects that pay specific attention to climate neutrality, mobility and the quality of shared space; affordable housing programmes using subsidies and mortgage programmes with subsidized rates; strategic plans for urban renewal and development; and the establishment of a government-funded investment fund to support renovation of social infrastructure.

64. Strategic planning frameworks (long-term national, regional and city action plans) are critical for the successful implementation of urban projects, since they ensure the required long-term financial and institutional resources. An important factor contributing to this success is the institutional design of financing programmes. Strong vertical and horizontal coordination and stakeholder involvement promote greater efficiency.

65. Managing expectations and planning realistically is a common challenge faced by public authorities. Appropriate governance arrangements are essential, as the lack of capacity of implementing agencies and insufficient coordination between authorities may lead to delays in the implementation of projects. Coordination should therefore be strengthened. Plans should have an appropriate long-term horizon and should be formulated taking into account expert knowledge in both the planning and implementation stages.

Second round table on sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11): promoting resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements

66. There are different approaches to promoting sustainable urban development and resilience at the national, regional and local levels. However, overcoming the gaps in the availability of reliable data for urban planning and disaster risk management and reduction is a common challenge for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

67. The application of standards for disaggregated data collection and the use of comprehensive indexes that capture vulnerabilities to natural and man-made disasters can be effective tools to gather this critical information. There is a need to build capacities for data collection and analysis in local and national planning documents.

Inter-agency initiatives and collaboration with academic institutions can support these efforts.

68. There are multiple challenges in developing intersectoral cooperation between different authorities while also involving all stakeholders. It is therefore crucial to coordinate and synchronize the planning and implementation of activities at the national and local levels, as well as to ensure the necessary political will.

69. Critical tasks include mapping potential urban development and resilience challenges, developing risk-sensitive urban plans, implementing sustainable urban development measures and developing scenarios for long-term resilient, healthy and sustainable urban development. Progress in all these areas demands strong cooperation, capacity development and broad partnerships.

70. Inclusiveness and access for all should be important concerns when developing relevant initiatives. Bottom-up participation, transparency and accountability should be guiding principles in urban planning. The needs of vulnerable and marginalized people should be taken into account and supported by disaggregated data collection. Gender inclusive planning and budgeting are key to ensuring that cities provide safe public spaces that are free of gender-based violence, as stressed by civil society organizations.

71. The adoption of comprehensive legal frameworks supporting reconstruction of buildings can be effective measures to address hazard-risk vulnerabilities. However, lack of coordination between different authorities and legal inconsistencies create difficulties for implementation and weaken the role of the responsible authorities.

72. Appropriate financing for urban development and resilience, including for natural and man-made disaster management is essential. Promoting cost-sharing between different authorities and stakeholders, including the active involvement of private sector actors such as infrastructure and insurance companies, is important. This can reduce the financial burden of initiatives to alleviate the consequences of natural disasters and disaster prevention measures. Strengthening microfinance institutions and home-owners associations also contributes to scaling up financing for urban renewal and development.

73. Private-public partnerships play a role in creating smart, sustainable and resilient cities and addressing financing constraints. However, it is important that these partnerships are designed in such a way that they do not create a source of risk to public finances and that affordability and inclusiveness considerations are duly taken into account.

First round table on sustainable consumption and production (Goal 12): successful approaches to delivering on sustainable consumption and production by 2030

74. Sustainable consumption and production is an objective with links to most of the Sustainable Development Goals, although these relationships are not yet fully understood. Policies and actions to integrate Goal 12 across sectors and at all levels remain a challenge in many countries. There is also a need to ensure that large initiatives with the potential for significant investment and with a possible impact on the environment are green from the early stages of their development and in their implementation.

75. Goal 12 cannot be achieved without consumers changing their behaviour and making more educated choices, seeking sustainable products and choosing to repair rather than replace. Information on products and their environmental and social impacts is often lacking or even misleading.

76. Poor information also prevents a better understanding by the private sector of the longer-term benefits of sustainable consumption and production for business. Governments can send investment signals through incentives and regulations, while society can affect production through choices by consumers.

77. There are technologies that can contribute to sustainable consumption and production, but gaps remain between research and development on the one hand, and commercialization and implementation on the other. However, civil society organizations stressed that there is a need to go beyond innovation and increased consumer awareness: a systemic change is required to move to a new growth paradigm that reduces the use of resources in terms of absolute amounts.

78. There are multiple initiatives by governments and other stakeholders to tackle these challenges. Policy frameworks and action plans that enable the transition to more sustainable consumption and production patterns are being put in place. Regulation on issues such as planned obsolescence or the recovery and reuse of limited natural resources have been adopted in some countries. Innovation is being encouraged through financial assistance for start-up businesses and supportive regulatory frameworks. Companies are also given support to introduce technological solutions and best practices.

79. Sustainable public procurement is a particularly powerful instrument for all levels of government because of its weight in national economies and its effect on markets, but it is often misunderstood as expensive, complicated and time-consuming. Countries have established help desks, platforms and training centres, but regulations also have a key role to play. Other tools include eco-labelling, certification schemes and life-cycle cost calculators, which provide a basis for more informed decisions.

80. International cooperation can support technology transfer, help to attract investment and promote sharing of good practices. This includes the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. This Framework has generated the main platform that supports the shift to sustainable consumption and production globally, through action on the ground, networks and capacity-building. Several European countries have taken a leading role within this Framework. Several international organizations work on sustainable procurement in the health sector while others have launched a global dialogue on healthier environments through trade.

81. Starting small and scaling up initial efforts facilitate policy experimentation and successful outcomes. This strategy can also be followed when replicating or adapting existing initiatives to other national contexts, including by drawing on experiences presented in the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy and shared on the Green Growth Knowledge Platform.

82. A successful delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals requires investment in and improvement of infrastructure. Infrastructure projects present an important opportunity to accelerate the transition to a more resource-efficient economy if investment decisions are fully aligned with the Goals and if big infrastructure developments, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, do not put undue additional pressure on the environment. In this context, a particular concern is the increasing extraction of raw materials, especially in the pan-European region. The development and implementation of global standards for the extraction of raw materials foster a level playing field across countries and businesses and facilitate fair access and sustainable management of mineral resources, and so enable the extractive industries to fully contribute to the achievement of the Goals.

83. To promote sustainable consumption and production, there is a need to ensure strong political leadership for transformation accompanied by horizontal and vertical

coordination and supported by appropriate governance and institutional structures. Legislation that is supportive of sustainable consumption and production should be introduced, but change will not come without the provision of appropriate public resources. There is a need to increase awareness and improve education on sustainable consumption and production, including by demonstrating the cost of inaction. Knowledge gaps should be addressed by developing indicators and monitoring frameworks that can capture both the environmental and the socioeconomic impacts of consumption and production patterns. Digitalization presents opportunities that should be exploited.

Second round table on sustainable consumption and production (Goal 12): towards a circular economy — innovation for sustainable value chains

84. A circular economy is an economy that takes pollution and waste out of the system, maintains products and materials in use and regenerates natural capital. It promotes resource and energy efficiency, reduces food waste along the whole supply chain, builds sustainable infrastructure and provides access to basic services and green and decent jobs, for a better quality of life for all. It represents a horizontal approach offering an opportunity to achieve targets under many of the Sustainable Development Goals, including not only Goal 12 on responsible production and consumption, but also those related to water, energy, sustainable cities, climate change and sustainable use of natural resources, among others.

85. The transition from a linear to a circular model is still at a very early stage. Today, it is estimated that less than 10 per cent of the global economy is circular. This raises the question of how fast the transition can be achieved and how to deal with those economic sectors and activities that cannot make the transition fast enough. A systemic transition requires cooperation across all ministries and levels of government as well as a multi-stakeholder and partnership approach. An effective measurement and monitoring system needs to be in place to get the policy mix right.

86. Voluntary and bottom-up approaches can yield success, but enabling regulation is also important as a catalyst for change. Tackling regulatory barriers within and across countries appears to be efficient and cost-effective. At the same time, integrated packages of policy measures, such as fiscal incentives, investment in research and development, innovation along the whole product life cycle and sustainable public procurement, are also seen as instrumental in driving the necessary changes. Spurred by these measures, new business models are emerging. Social enterprises are playing an important role in this transformation, in particular in the sharing economy.

87. The necessary cultural shift can be facilitated through policies, regulations and approaches for strengthening consumers' awareness, such as traceability systems in value chains, eco-labelling schemes and sustainability standards. Market surveillance systems are essential to ensure compliance and enhance consumers' trust. While changes influencing consumer behaviour are important, extended producer responsibility and accountability are also considered important factors for change. Technological developments, such as blockchain technology, the Internet of things and artificial intelligence may be enablers for a systemic change, if properly harnessed.

88. At the same time, compliance with ecological and other sustainability standards developed in advanced economies may create market access barriers, particularly for small producers from transition and developing economies. The international community has a key role to play to create policy frameworks and platforms for knowledge and technology transfer and capacity-building. The transition to a circular

economy presents a great opportunity to create a positive narrative on economic integration and globalization.

First round table on sustainable forests and ecosystems (Goal 15): sustainable forest management and the Sustainable Development Goals

89. Forests are critical ecosystems, central to all three dimensions of sustainable development. Sustainable forest management also involves multiple dimensions, bringing together a range of stakeholders (forest owners, businesses, local and state authorities, non-governmental organizations and others), who must work together to maintain ecosystem functions and ensure the provision of forest-related services and goods.

90. Sustainable forest management allows the economic use of forests without having a damaging environmental impact. However, the perception of an irreconcilable conflict persists. There is therefore a need to better understand the potential of forest products for sustainable production and consumption and dispel misunderstandings that limit policy options.

91. Governance systems are often ill suited to meet the needs of sustainable forest management. Political support remains insufficient as there is limited understanding among policymakers of the multiple contributions forests can make. Businesses can play a critical role in driving change, including by demanding an appropriate framework in support of sustainable forest management. The sector also suffers from severe financial constraints, as sustainable forest management financing is still dominated by revenues from wood since other forest services do not generate sufficient financial returns.

92. Overall, there is a need to broaden and strengthen the basis of support for sustainable forest management. Improved communication and awareness-raising initiatives would spread knowledge on the potential of forests and forest products to make a significant contribution to the green/bio/circular economy as well as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Paris Agreement.

93. The creation of platforms facilitating dialogue between authorities, local communities, businesses, owners and consumers on choices to be taken around the management and use of forests can serve to reinforce mutual trust and provide the basis for strong partnerships. Widely accepted verification mechanisms, including transparent reporting, certification, traceability and consumer information, can contribute to enhancing confidence. Such mechanisms would facilitate the emergence of transformative business initiatives, changing the way of doing business in support of a circular economy through circular companies and the circular design of products (i.e. renewable and recyclable).

94. Sustainable forest management has strong linkages with other sustainable development goals and successful initiatives in this area can meet multiple simultaneous objectives, including, for example, afforestation to prevent erosion and sequester carbon, or the integration of biodiversity conservation into sustainable forest management. Individual initiatives work better when they are part of larger strategies, for instance being included in national strategies and actions or large-scale business plans. Sustainable forest management should pay attention to cross-sectoral issues, addressing linkages with tourism, agriculture and water, for example. Initiatives that generate income, including through providing assistance to forest owners and businesses in commercializing forest products, strengthen social support by creating jobs for local communities. Public interventions should also enhance the environmental capacities of forests, including by promoting peatland restoration, resilience to climate change, biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

95. Ultimately, success will depend on the development and adoption of a common understanding of sustainable forest management. For this to emerge, there is a need to open initiatives to all stakeholders and better involve consumers in choosing sustainable patterns of consumption on the basis of forest products. The discussions on wood and forests should involve audiences outside the forest sector, so that messages are widely shared and provide a strong basis for concerted action. This will support the recognition of the multiple roles that forests can make to the green economy and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Second round table on sustainable forests and ecosystems (Goal 15): biodiversity at the heart of sustainable development — towards transformation and resilience

96. Biodiversity and healthy ecosystems provide the foundation for life on earth and for much of our economic activities and support our social structures and cultural traditions. However, the continued loss of global biodiversity and the relentless pressure on ecosystems are alarming and well-established facts. The 2030 Agenda opens new possibilities to engage with broader policy audiences and other stakeholders in halting the loss of biodiversity, sharing the benefits of genetic resources and promoting access to such resources. Biodiversity should be mainstreamed, for example, in land use planning, agriculture and sustainable forest management. These interconnections open new pathways for policy interventions. Appropriate and accessible data, including through the use of information and communications technology, is required for monitoring purposes, so as to better understand the consequences of different actions and to facilitate the integration of different sectors in policy initiatives.

97. Coordination and integration of biodiversity concerns at the national level is often not done in a systematic manner. There is a need to be more ambitious in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity and to drive transformational change through the integration of biodiversity into social, economic and climate policies, among others. However, efforts in this direction are frequently undermined by imperfect governance systems and insufficient political support, which partly reflects a limited understanding among policymakers of the essential role biodiversity plays. In some countries, these problems are compounded by institutional, political and financial instability. Enforcement of existing regulations is sometimes lacking.

98. The strong linkages between enhancing resilient ecosystems and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals are not fully appreciated. Initiatives to communicate the potential of biodiversity and build bridges between the different actors, including land users, are critical. This would widen the space for policy action and partnerships.

99. Biodiversity has a cross-sectoral dimension and therefore appropriate platforms for engaging all stakeholders around the management of ecosystems and the conservation of nature reserves should be promoted. In that regard, particularly close links exist between biodiversity and sustainable forest management. Consumers have an important role to play, so tools such as labelling and certification schemes are also helpful.

100. Efforts to protect nature can also contribute to economic development strategies. Close relations exist between economic and income-generating activities and biodiversity, for example tourism and agriculture. While potential conflicts exist, building trust among different stakeholders should facilitate appropriate management of these conflicts.

101. Resilient ecosystems have a positive influence on human health. They are also critical for maintaining the living conditions of indigenous people. Various approaches exist for the valorization of ecosystem services, which should be further explored in order to expand financing flows. Given all these benefits, continued attention should be paid to enhancing the environmental capacities of different ecosystems and promoting biodiversity.

102. Transboundary initiatives can address the cross-border dimension of some biodiversity issues and reap the benefits of various synergies that can be derived from international collaboration, which is supported by a number of normative frameworks, including the Convention on Biological Diversity. Local issues have significance on a wider scale, touching the national, regional and global levels. Coordination across borders requires resources and continued effort. Some countries are including biodiversity as part of development assistance financing to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

103. Further progress is required in developing a common understanding of biodiversity and, in particular, of the indicators that would make effective monitoring possible, thus providing the foundation for an effective cross-sectoral dialogue. The importance of biodiversity for implementation of the Goals is not sufficiently understood and therefore more data and analysis are required.

Connecting the dots: sustainable resource management and lifestyles in the region

104. The integrated 2030 Agenda requires initiatives that fully reflect the linkages between the different Goals, in terms of both their design and their implementation. Intersectoral coordination is key for effective implementation. Policy lessons drawn from actions targeting particular Goals may have a more general relevance and therefore should be disseminated beyond sectoral audiences. Sharing information and knowledge across sectoral boundaries is the basis for identifying initiatives that have a positive impact across different Goals.

105. All the Sustainable Development Goals that were considered in depth at the regional forum (those on water, energy, cities, sustainable consumption and production, sustainable forest management and biodiversity) have an impact on the achievement of other Goals. There are multiple and strong interlinkages. Sometimes, these have been reflected in specific normative instruments, such as the Protocol on Water and Health to the Water Convention. However, identifying them is not sufficient as a basis for informed policy actions. More progress is required on understanding, measuring and assessing these interrelationships.

106. A cross-sectoral approach is essential, but this should be complemented by the consideration of transboundary dimensions. Regional initiatives should serve as platforms to advance the Goals. Subregional integration associations in the region, including the Eurasian Economic Union, have an important role to play in the implementation of the Goals, in particular by stimulating trade through the adoption of common standards.

107. There is a need to reconcile different objectives and ensure that no one is left behind. For example, while addressing competing needs on water, equitable access should be guaranteed. Initiatives to improve energy efficiency should take into account issues of affordability for the poor and vulnerable. Integrated urban planning should address the needs of citizens of all ages. Ecosystem services and biodiversity also serve as an important source of livelihood for the rural poor.

108. The Sustainable Development Goals define a transformative agenda; but this transformation requires that the interest of all groups affected by the transition are taken into account. The introduction of more sustainable patterns of consumption and production will improve resource efficiency and can have beneficial effects in other areas, such as health. However, moving away from a linear to a circular economy also carries risks. While some economic activities will expand, others will contract. There is therefore a need to address job losses and skill gaps and introduce other forms of public intervention to smooth the effects of these changes.

109. The significance of appropriate information was remarked on by many participants. Policymaking should make a more intensive use of scientific knowledge. Evidence provides the foundation for a well-informed dialogue across different policy areas that effectively breaks down silos. It contributes to the effectiveness of communication initiatives and increased awareness of the implications of actions, including at the individual level.

110. Some policy instruments can also have a cross-sectoral dimension, if appropriately designed. Participants mentioned the use of sustainable public sector procurement as a useful tool having an impact across many areas. The potential of digitalization and information and communications technology should also be harnessed, as they are cross-cutting enablers for all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through the incorporation of information and communications technology in national sustainable plans and strategies.

111. Financing is a common constraint faced when trying to advance the various Goals. Overcoming this constraint requires imaginative responses that should take advantage of the possibilities offered by cross-sectoral cooperation. The involvement of the private sector, which is essential for rapid progress, would contribute to mobilizing the necessary financing.

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Input from the Fifth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat hereby transmits the input from the Fifth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Bangkok from 28 to 30 March 2018, to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

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Report of the Fifth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

[Original: Chinese, English, French and Russian]

1. The Fifth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), was held in Bangkok from 28 to 30 March 2018.

2. It was attended by more than 750 participants, including representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies, international organizations, civil society organizations and other entities.

3. The Forum was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members of ESCAP: Afghanistan; Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; France; Georgia; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; Pakistan; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Turkmenistan; Tuvalu; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam. Representatives of Germany, Israel, Nigeria, Sweden and Switzerland attended as observers.

4. Under agenda item 1 (a), the Chair of the Fourth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, Pakistan, made a statement on behalf of the Bureau on the outcome of the Fourth Forum. A video message was delivered by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP delivered a keynote address and provided an overview of the Fifth Forum. Statements were also delivered by Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, and Ms. Joan Carling on behalf of civil society.

5. Under agenda item 1 (b), the Forum elected the following Bureau members:

(a) Co-Chairs:

Mr. Levan Davitashvili (Georgia)
Mr. Rajiv Kumar (India)

(b) Vice-Chairs:

Mr. Thinley Namgyel (Bhutan)
Mr. George Sharvashidze (Georgia)
Mr. David Ranibok Adeang (Nauru)
Mr. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary (Pakistan)
Mr. Alexander Bedritsky (Russian Federation)
Ms. Faimalotoa Kika Iemaima Stowers (Samoa)
Mr. Tojiddin Jurazoda (Tajikistan)
Mr. Ezizgeldi Annamuhammedov (Turkmenistan)

6. Under agenda item 1 (c), the Forum adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the Forum:

(a) Opening statements;

(b) Election of officers;

(c) Adoption of the agenda.

2. Regional perspectives on the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3. Strengthening the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific region.

4. Other matters.

5. Review and adoption of the draft report of the Forum.

6. Closing of the Forum.

7. Under agenda item 2, a high-level panel discussed regional perspectives and trends related to the theme of the Forum, and good practices and effective interventions to build and strengthen resilience in the region.

8. A plenary discussion on progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 17 was held. The Forum was informed of key recommendations from five round tables, held during the Forum, which had conducted an in-depth review of Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15, to be addressed at the forthcoming high-level political forum on sustainable development of the Economic and Social Council.[1]

9. Under agenda item 3, the Asia-Pacific countries participating in voluntary national reviews for the high-level political forums on sustainable development in 2016, 2017 and 2018 shared national perspectives on challenges, progress and achievements relating to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as lessons learned from the review.

10. The Forum was informed of the progress with respect to the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.

11. Members States, major groups and other stakeholders, and United Nations agencies shared perspectives on the role and achievements of partnerships in the region in accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

12. Under agenda item 4, no other matters were discussed.

13. Under agenda item 5, the Forum adopted the present report and the Chair's summary of the Forum, contained in annex I to the present document, on 30 March 2018.

14. The following publications were launched: *Transformation Towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies in Asia and the Pacific*, jointly published by ESCAP, the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme; and *Partnering for Sustainable Development: Guidelines for Multi-stakeholder Partnerships to Implement the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific*, developed by the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability and ESCAP. The Asia-Pacific launch of *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2018: Nature-based Solutions for Water*, coordinated by the World Water Assessment Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization under UN-Water, was held as part of the marking of World Water Day 2018.

15. Side events were held from 28 to 30 March 2018.[2]

16. The following preparatory events were held: the Preparatory Youth Forum for the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development; the Asia-Pacific Peoples' Forum

[1] The full summaries and recommendations from the round tables are available from www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/apfsd5.

[2] A list of side events is available from www.unescap.org/events/apfsd-2018-side-events.

for Sustainable Development 2018: Defending the Environment and Redefining Resilience — Our Collective Actions for Development Justice; the ESCAP/United Nations Human Settlements Programme Asia-Pacific Regional Training Workshop on Human Settlement Indicators; the Embassy of Sweden in Thailand/ESCAP regional workshop on building resilience through participation; the ESCAP/Overseas Development Institute workshop on leaving no one behind in the Asia-Pacific region; and the ESCAP/Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat regional preparatory workshop for voluntary national review countries from the Asia-Pacific region.

17. The Forum concluded that the present report, including its annex, should be brought to the attention of the Commission, at its seventy-fourth session, and to the global dialogues on sustainable development, including in particular the upcoming high-level political forum on sustainable development, which would be held in New York from 9 to 18 July 2018.

Annex

Chair's summary of discussions at the Fifth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

1. The theme of the Fifth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development was "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies". During the Forum, members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), intergovernmental bodies, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, and major groups and other stakeholders engaged in a dialogue on regional perspectives on the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific region. The Forum also discussed means to strengthen implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region.

I. Regional perspectives on the theme of the Fifth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

2. During the session, panellists reflected on the social, environmental and economic challenges to achieving sustainable development and on institutional responses that were being mainstreamed in the region to strengthen resilience to natural disasters and economic shocks, improve the livelihoods of vulnerable populations and ensure that no one was left behind. Social risk factors, such as gender inequality, lack of social protection, rural-urban inequality and lack of financial inclusion and diversification of economic activities, were also discussed.

3. The Forum stressed the importance of inclusive, multi-stakeholder participation, including by disadvantaged and risk-exposed populations, and engagement by all levels of government, including subnational and local authorities. The Forum noted efforts in the region to identify and empower poor and vulnerable populations, including women and children, and to strengthen resilience through social inclusion, health, education, housing, nutrition and food security, water and sanitation strategies and awareness programmes. Capacity-building and regional cooperation were also discussed as opportunities to develop mechanisms for mutual support, with a view to defining common approaches, strengthening climate change response and building resilient communities, including in coastal areas and low-lying islands.

4. The Forum noted the need to build resilient infrastructure and develop early warning systems, including with respect to education and preparedness for natural disasters and economic shocks, and to make transport connections climate-proof. The Forum noted progress in the region in mainstreaming climate change policies, including through the adoption of policies on energy efficiency and renewable energy, and the development of action at the local level. One representative stressed the need to assess the sectoral impacts of climate change across the economy.

5. The efforts of Governments to align policies with the 2030 Agenda and other relevant frameworks, such as the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, and to cooperate with other regional organizations such as the Eurasian Economic Commission and joint efforts in the Eurasian Economic Union to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals were underlined. Several representatives noted the need to establish monitoring systems and improve interministerial coordination in order to effectively integrate policy responses to increase resilience, including by identifying the most relevant indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals framework to national circumstances. The adoption of innovative approaches and use of new technologies were highlighted as key tools to support the success of efforts to build resilience. One permanent observer highlighted the need for Governments to

facilitate broad participation in resilience building, taking into account stakeholders' risk analysis and perspectives, and to expand quantitative evidence on the benefits of participation, define dimensions of effective engagement and develop innovative communication methods to engage stakeholders.

6. Representatives from international organizations stressed that a focus on resilience was necessary to achieve multiple Sustainable Development Goals. Associated risks of megatrends such as climate change, industrial development and rising inequalities could endanger regional progress towards the Goals. The need for attention to gender equality and for the empowerment of multiple stakeholders, including women and poor populations, were noted. Pre-disaster planning, wider disaster risk reduction programmes and innovative, integrated and coordinated responses were discussed as regional needs.

7. Representatives from major groups and other stakeholders emphasized the need to strengthen social infrastructure, including the roles of social entrepreneurship and social enterprises to serve as innovative and transformational platforms to address poverty and build resilience. They also emphasized the need for attention to grass-roots and marginalized constituencies and for focus on human rights and the priorities of poor communities, including populations living in urban slums and unliveable areas.

II. Progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 17 and promotion of the means of implementation

8. The Forum reviewed progress in the region towards the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 17, particularly with respect to global and multi-stakeholder partnerships, technology and innovation, and data and statistics. Panellists and representatives highlighted perspectives on indicators, data gaps and means of implementation in terms of alignment with national contexts. Presenters and panellists discussed priority areas for implementing the Goals and building resilience — such as technology and innovation, finance and trade, renewable energy, connectivity and communication technology, food security, productive employment, social protection, climate change, sanitation and water resource management, and data and statistics — and reported on progress made in their countries.

9. Representatives reported on international development efforts, noting their alignment with the principles of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, while also calling for enhanced mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of aid and for strengthened accountability and transparency of development cooperation. One representative called for more political will to collaborate to achieve the Goals and leave no one behind, while another called for the Forum to continuously support member States by examining pathways towards resilience. Several representatives noted the importance of multi-stakeholder and multilevel partnerships, including with civil society, academia and business, and provided concrete examples of such partnerships. Some representatives highlighted gender equality as a tool for achieving the Goals and called for participation by marginalized groups to be enhanced to ensure that their voice was heard. Representatives reported on increased domestic financial mobilization and called for increased foreign direct investment and voluntary contributions.

10. Progress was reported by several representatives on data and statistics linked to the Goals, including the development of country-specific and local indicators. The Forum noted the need to address data and statistical challenges, in particular further methodological development and enhanced data generation and disaggregation. Several representatives called on international and regional statistical institutions to

take specific action and provide clear guidance to countries on methodology and standards for the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics and data and encouraged technical and financial support to reduce data gaps and increasing data quality.

11. The Forum pointed to the usefulness of administrative data, particularly for civil registration and vital statistics. One representative noted the development of an effective system for civil registration and vital statistics, which enabled more accurate diagnosis of social issues for more adequate policies and coordinated measures. The development and strengthening of the statistical capacities of countries in the region were important for evidence-based decision-making and accountability. Countries were producing high-quality and timely statistics by using new data sources and technologies.

12. Major groups and stakeholders cautioned that partnerships with business should benefit workers and called for social dialogue to ensure decent work.

III. Assessment of progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15 at the regional level

13. The Forum conducted an in-depth review of five of the six Sustainable Development Goals that would be the focus of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2018, in line with General Assembly resolution 70/299 on the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level.

14. Under agenda item 2, five parallel round tables were held on the follow-up to and review of Goals 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15. Rapporteurs from the round tables informed the Forum about their recommendations, as described below.

15. The round table on Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation) made several recommendations on the Goal in Asia and the Pacific.[3]

16. Asia and the Pacific had made some progress towards achieving Goal 6. However, the region needed to accelerate its efforts across all sectors to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030. Acceleration could be supported by encouraging policy coherence and intersectoral coordination within and between countries by enhancing synergies and minimizing trade-offs between sectors and Goals. Water-resource management, within and across countries, needed further attention and required the implementation of existing policies and laws in the water sector, supported by monitoring and accountability schemes. More efforts should be made to ensure just and equitable access to water and sanitation for all, with a particular focus on women and children and poor people.

17. Given that the region faced serious scarcity issues, with the lowest availability of water per capita in the world, the region needed to improve and stimulate the management of recycled water and other sources of water, such as rainwater, as valuable resources. Governments needed to design better incentives and systems to ensure compliance with respect to water management and sanitation and stronger policies to fully eliminate water pollution. Good practices like raising awareness and promoting clean water and sanitation in relation to human rights and human health, and in the world of work, should be actively promoted. Stronger attention should be paid to water-related innovations and the promotion of green jobs across countries, but it was also important to promote existing technologies that could be applied in new sectors or in new settings. All of those objectives could be achieved only by

[3] The round-table summary for Goal 6 is available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/APFSD_Roundtable_SDG_6_Report.pdf.

promoting partnerships and ensuring wide participation by local stakeholders, including women and indigenous communities and other vulnerable groups.

18. The round table on Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy) made several recommendations on the Goal in Asia and the Pacific.[4]

19. Achievement of universal access to energy would require additional efforts and collaboration by all stakeholders, including Governments, the private sector and civil society. Platforms for raising awareness needed to be created and the roles of the stakeholders must be efficiently coordinated to achieve coherent action, enable multi-stakeholder dialogue with a view to improving progress towards Goal 7 and engage international development partners where needed. Issues of quality and reliability of energy access and availability of reliable data for monitoring needed to be promptly tackled by policymakers. National targets for clean cooking fuels and technologies should be established, and the issues of clean cooking and the development of renewable energy sources must be better integrated into energy policy frameworks, taking into consideration specific cultural differences among member States. Efforts to promote affordable and accessible renewable sources were urgently needed in order to address environmental sustainability and air pollution. Energy efficiency measures were required as a matter of urgency in social and public services, such as in the transport, industry and building sectors, and would need full support through subsidies from national Governments. To facilitate renewable energy and energy efficiency expansion, member States needed to address existing policy barriers such as monopolistic utility positions and the lack of regulation of energy prices.

20. With the support of ESCAP and relevant regional institutions, member States needed to develop an intergovernmental mechanism to promote equitable cross-border electricity power trade and connectivity as one of the building blocks towards attaining sustainable development. International energy cooperation efforts to deploy publicly available innovative technologies, along with safeguards, needed to be enhanced among member States. Energy sector reform was needed to move from vertically integrated energy systems to more comprehensively integrated approaches that encouraged local production and State regulation in distribution and transmission, and therefore improved affordability and increased resilience to blackouts. Policymaking processes and governance should be made more transparent through appropriate control and monitoring mechanisms, as well as through enhanced public participation. Energy policies needed to respond to the needs of the local communities and stimulate sustainable energy projects. Small renewable energy projects were resource-efficient, environmentally sustainable and capable of stimulating economic growth and providing jobs and needed to be promoted across the region. The close linkages between water, food and energy required a suitably integrated approach to ensuring water and food security, sustainable agriculture and energy production.

21. The round table on Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) highlighted several recommendations to make further progress on the Goal in Asia and the Pacific.[5]

22. Asia-Pacific countries needed to accelerate progress against Sustainable Development Goal 11 by empowering local governments and community groups to deliver against that Goal in an integrated fashion across all the Goals and global sustainability agendas. While it had been estimated that 65 per cent of the total Goal targets needed to be delivered by local authorities and actors, that was not matched

[4] The round-table summary for Goal 7 is available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/APFSD_Roundtable_SDG_7_Report_Final.pdf.

[5] The round-table summary for Goal 11 is available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/APFSD_Roundtable_SDG_11_Report.pdf.

with the requisite decision-making authority required to drive local implementation of Goal 11 and all urban related targets.

23. Recommendations on efforts to build an enabling environment and policy coherence across different spheres of government for stronger progress against Sustainable Development Goal 11 included (a) national Government partnerships with local and regional governments and communities to operationalize Goal 11 should be enhanced and greater decentralization of functions to local authorities to support their efforts to deliver on Goal 11 on the ground should specifically focus on deepening fiscal devolution processes to address the issue of unfunded mandates which was hindering progress against the Goal; (b) inclusive implementation of Goal 11, specifically its social dimensions, should be strengthened through more targeted commitments to empower local communities, especially associations of the urban poor, who were vital to upgrade informal settlements and to leave no one behind in cities; (c) innovative local examples of effective implementation of Goal 11 by local governments and a diverse range of urban communities should be documented and scaled up to accelerate progress in countries leveraging South-South platforms for learning and further replication; and (d) many of the indicators under Goal 11 required spatial data collection from subnational actors to effectively measure and report on progress and therefore, harmonization, cooperation and capacity development aimed at subnational data collectors in partnership with national statistical authorities should be a priority moving forward.

24. The round table on Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production) highlighted several recommendations to make further progress on the Goal in Asia and the Pacific.[6]

25. Responsible consumption and production policies should be integrated into core economic agendas and sectoral plans with centralized and coordinated mechanisms for policies and initiatives, clearly identifying roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders. Multi-stakeholder networks should be strengthened by engaging scientific organizations, the private sector and civil society. Circular economy initiatives should be promoted, prioritizing sustainable public procurement. Responsible consumption and production should be seen as an enabler of the other Sustainable Development Goals.

26. Governments were encouraged to shift towards an integrated and inclusive circular economy approach by (a) identifying interlinkages across the Sustainable Development Goals at the target level and applying a cost-benefit analysis to identify synergies and trade-offs; (b) strengthening statistical capacity by investing in frameworks and databases that incorporated economic, environmental and social accounts for evidence-based policymaking; and (c) establishing interministerial dialogues and consultative multi-stakeholder processes and partnerships to inform inclusive and impactful policies as well as to coordinate joint implementation of a circular economy.

27. The round table on Sustainable Development Goal 15 (Life on land) highlighted several recommendations to make further progress on the Goal in Asia and the Pacific.[7]

28. Integrated data systems that supported ecosystem-based management, integrating information from diverse sources, including community, indigenous and traditional knowledge, should be used; engagement across sectors and stakeholders,

[6] The round-table summary for Goal 12 is available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/APFSD_Roundtable_SDG_12_Report.pdf.

[7] The round-table summary for Goal 15 is available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/APFSD_Roundtable_SDG_15_Report.pdf.

in particular with local communities and indigenous peoples should be encouraged; strengthened governance approaches and effective laws to promote participation to clarify land-tenure arrangement, to enforce the rights of indigenous peoples and environmental defenders, to support ecosystem-based management approaches and social impact assessments and to recognize the intrinsic rights of nature should be encouraged; diversification of financing and linking that with improvements in governance and management approaches should be encouraged; land degradation neutrality should be achieved; and regional cooperation should be strengthened, including by implementing the outcomes of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment held in 2017.

29. Given the vital importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services for human survival and well-being, it was essential to urgently mainstream biodiversity conservation into decision-making processes, including by ministries of finance, agriculture, infrastructure, planning, tourism and education, among others. That could be done by working in partnerships and adopting an integrated and evidence-based approach to sustainable development, planning and implementation, taking into account the links, synergies and trade-offs between Sustainable Development Goal 15 and other Goals, such as Goal 1 (No poverty), Goal 2 (Zero hunger), Goal 3 (Good health and well-being), Goal 5 (Gender equality), Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth), Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production), and Goal 13 (Climate action).

IV. Assessment of the interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals

30. The panellists emphasized the importance of preserving natural ecosystems and their services as a basis to achieve transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. Inequalities, damage to ecosystems and waste production were unprecedented. Actions on sustainable forest management were a means of reaching zero hunger, no poverty and gender equality and promoting good health, well-being and affordable and clean energy, among others, with young people playing a catalytic role. Three actions were recommended, focusing on initiating informed action at the individual level with involvement and engagement. Interlinkages were also discussed from the angle of water-sensitive cities and from the perspective of the private sector. The interlinkages were context-specific, and social and infrastructure resilience needed attention. Sustainable urban design provided a powerful integrating platform for addressing multiple issues, including through nature-based solutions.

31. The interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs between the Sustainable Development Goals were pointed out. Some member States outlined their initiatives in support of mainstreamed and integrated approaches to implementation, including the formulation of a Sustainable Development Goal road map, aligning the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks with the Goals, constitutional amendments to enhance inclusiveness and mainstreaming the Goals into budget processes. Strategic and policy actions on the cluster of Goals were also described, including those that presented integrated approaches to deal with access to basic services, rapid urbanization and the development of future growth centres, including beautification, disaster response, traffic management and waste reduction. Other priorities included promoting sustainable food management and consumption patterns, sustainable forest management, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. Currently more than 60 per cent of energy generated in one country was from renewable sources, while a green growth framework continued to orient the Government's investments.

32. In one country, institutional arrangements had been put in place to promote integrated approaches, including Sustainable Development Goal coordination and implementation committees and thematic committees. Efforts to promote integrated approaches were further strengthened through the involvement of stakeholders in implementation. However, horizontal and vertical coordination, lack of access to robust and disaggregated data, localization of the Goals and mainstreaming were still challenges.

33. One international organization emphasized support for integrated, nature-based solutions, with a focus on water. Several transboundary initiatives were in place, and the legal basis for management of transboundary water bodies was being strengthened. The organization offered its continued support to countries. One organization underlined the need to fully integrate air transport across the Sustainable Development Goals and the actions taken to mitigate the climate impact of the aviation sector. A joint statement was delivered by international agricultural organizations, with a group of indigenous people, emphasizing the need to foster productive synergies between rural and urban development to ensure that no one was left behind. Small-scale farmers were essential to all food systems and played important roles in the energy and water sectors. The interests and rights of indigenous peoples, smallholder farmers and women must underpin transformations towards sustainability in an integrated and socially inclusive manner.

34. Major groups and other stakeholders highlighted the need for an integrated approach to Sustainable Development Goal implementation given the close links between poverty, food security, energy, health, sustainable cities and climate change, among others. The indivisibility of human rights and the active participation of people were stressed as foundations for cooperation across sectors, stakeholders and levels of government. Mapping and planning for institutional coherence and the involvement of grass-roots and underrepresented communities, as well as groups at risk, in planning and implementation was urged. The structural drivers of inequality were described, together with the resulting inequality of access to quality public health care, the risks of trafficking and unequal access to justice. They called for strategies to strengthen control over natural resources, particularly by women as keepers of natural resources, in addition to greater investment in delivery of public goods as basic human rights.

V. National perspectives and progress through the lens of the voluntary national reviews

35. The participants in the session discussed key learning outcomes and challenges resulting from countries participating in the voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Member States highlighted the importance of (a) government ownership/political leadership; (b) stakeholder engagement and consultation; (c) coordination, within government and with stakeholders and development partners; (d) integration with national planning; and (e) ensuring the availability of quality, disaggregated data for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals and their follow-up.

36. Political leadership and good intragovernmental coordination was important for ensuring government ownership. To ensure government ownership and coordination, one country had created a presidential decree that served as a guideline for coordination, and others had established committees or coordinating councils at top levels, some directly under the Head of Government. Citizen engagement, ownership and localization were considered key in formulating policies and action plans on the

Sustainable Development Goals. Transparency and accountability were also important to building peaceful and inclusive societies.

37. The Forum emphasized the importance of full and comprehensive consultations that included a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, businesses, local governments, philanthropies and the media. The Forum also emphasized the importance of integrating the Sustainable Development Goals with national planning tools and processes, including for monitoring and follow-up. Several countries had already integrated the Goals into existing national planning instruments.

38. The importance of accurate, timely and disaggregated data was highlighted by the Forum, which noted that data was a challenge even for developed countries. One representative reported having established an electronic monitoring tool for the Sustainable Development Goals. The system would help to distribute information on progress and would also help to ensure accountability and transparency of government agencies. Finally, the Forum highlighted funding as a challenge, in particular for least developed countries.

39. Major groups and other stakeholders emphasized the importance of inclusiveness and the meaningful participation of civil society, in particular those representing marginalized groups, including in establishing indicators that reflect the aspiration of the Sustainable Development Goals. Voluntary national reviews could serve as an accountability mechanism to hold Governments accountable and responsible to the people.

VI. Progress on the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

40. The Forum reviewed progress on the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, adopted by the Fourth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in 2017 and endorsed by ESCAP member States at the seventy-third session of the Commission. The session included a video prepared by the secretariat to illustrate cooperation with member States and partners in implementing the road map's priority areas of action, followed by a summary of actions taken to implement it in the past year. Country and stakeholder statements highlighted ongoing action across all sectors, expressed appreciation for support by regional partners such as ESCAP, and drew attention to remaining gaps, such as statistical capacity.

41. Member States highlighted their follow-up and contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific. The active participation of civil society, youth, women, vulnerable groups, businesses and others was noted as a need, to be enhanced through capacity-building programmes which actively partnered with a diverse range of stakeholders. The collection of adequate and reliable disaggregated data was also seen as vital in the effort to leave no one behind in the regional implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

42. Representatives of one country noted that equal importance was given to both adaptation and mitigation through their national adaptation plan and nationally appropriate mitigation actions and emphasized that the impact of frequent cyclones had made it essential for a well-coordinated multisectoral programmatic approach to flood mitigation to ensure the resilience of the communities most affected. Significant investments in capacity-building for data collection and analysis, especially in

developing countries, were essential to meet the commitment on disaggregation of data and to make necessary policy adjustments in ensuring that no one was left behind.

43. Major groups and other stakeholders emphasized the need to increase domestic resource mobilization for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in least developed countries. They urged member States to revitalize the discussions of a regional tax body to tackle the issues of harmful use of tax incentives and illicit financial flows and to pursue regional cooperation mechanisms for the recovery of assets and potential lost revenues. Major groups and other stakeholders suggested that the road map was a living document and could be adjusted, especially with regard to the means of implementation, which fell short on the inclusion of various community issues, such as the removal of structural barriers and the promotion of human rights. There was also a need to ensure adequate availability of investments to support youth to engage in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Non-governmental organizations also called for the scaling up of efforts for community-based data collection for the Goals and for compatibility impact assessments of trade and investment agreements, the targeting of illicit financial flows and a convention to address corporate consolidation.

VII. Partnerships for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

44. The participants in the session discussed how to harness partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as part of agenda item 3 on strengthening the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific region. The session facilitated discussion between a multi-stakeholder panel and member States, United Nations bodies and other stakeholders to highlight the diverse partnership methods, success stories, challenges and key criteria that underpinned successful partnerships in pursuit of sustainable development.

45. The panellists noted that long term multi-stakeholder and multisectoral partnerships, founded on participatory and inclusive processes were critical to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. There was a need to generate data to monitor the performance of partnerships, and adequate monitoring and accountability mechanisms should be integrated into partnerships to improve their transparency. Realizing the specific resources and capacities that each stakeholder could bring was critical for transformative partnerships. Developing local capacity in all contexts needed to be a guiding principle of all partnerships. The panellists urged stakeholders to harness the power of volunteers, youth groups and the scientific community in strengthening partnerships. Some panellists cautioned that care was needed in ensuring that the partnership agenda was not captured by individual groups with vested interests and emphasized the need to ensure the protection of human rights and development justice in all partnerships.

46. The Forum stated the importance of building strong partnerships within and among member States and with other stakeholders for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In that context, the Forum expressed its appreciation for the Commission's efforts to build partnerships in the region. The need to strengthen partnerships, with industry to unleash entrepreneurship and with civil society to spread awareness of Sustainable Development Goals, was also highlighted. The Forum recounted the success of the region in establishing regional and subregional partnerships in the fields of trade, investment and connectivity and called for the safeguarding of the multilateral trading system. The Forum called for expanding partnerships at the regional level in areas such as climate change, food security, Goal

indicator frameworks, energy, infrastructure, labour mobility, technology, knowledge-sharing and financial integration and macroeconomic cooperation, including through mutually reinforcing partnerships with communities across the region.

47. Several organizations emphasized the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships in addressing the many economic, environmental and social challenges as well as in assessing the Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators and ensuring inclusion of vulnerable populations and local groups.

48. Major groups and other stakeholders emphasized the importance of integrating the commitments to human rights in partnerships to ensure the full participation of rights' holders, integrating issues like accessibility from the start. Partnerships should respect workers and trade union rights, foster decent work and support traditional knowledge systems for the Sustainable Development Goals. Public-private partnerships should be built on human rights standards with high levels of transparency, accountability, whistle-blower protection and respect for indigenous cultures. Investor-State dispute settlement, provided for by international investment agreements, risked limiting the space for ensuring such rights.

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Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

Discussion papers on the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, submitted by major groups and other stakeholders

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present document is a compilation of the executive summaries of the position papers on the theme of the high-level political forum, "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies", submitted by the various major groups and other relevant stakeholders that have autonomously established and maintained effective coordination mechanisms for participation in the high-level political forum on sustainable development, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/290. The full reports are posted on the website of the forum: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018.

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I. Women

1. The complexity of women's lives and realities is reflected in the intersectional nature of the Sustainable Development Goals. Of the 17 Goals, 8 explicitly integrate commitments to women and girls, and the achievement of targets across the agenda has implications for the human rights of women and girls. The six Goals under review at the 2018 high-level political forum, on water and sanitation; energy; safe and sustainable cities; protecting biodiversity; addressing unsustainable consumption and production; and ensuring the means of implementation to achieve the Goals, are as important for gender equality as they are critical for sustainable development.

2. The paper submitted by the women's major group offers a detailed gender analysis of the six Goals, demonstrates how women and girls are affected differently by development failures and provides specific recommendations for action.

3. As Governments take forward the implementation of the six Goals, the women's major group provides the cross-cutting recommendations set out below.

4. Member States should actively support the meaningful participation of women in decision-making. From increasing access to safe drinking water, to ensuring that women and girls have the information and means necessary to be able to practise menstrual health, to protecting forests, biodiversity and sustainable agriculture, to addressing safety and security within cities, women offer particular expertise and must be at the table when decisions are made. Governments should create formal opportunities for the most marginalized groups of women and the women most affected by policies and programmes under consideration to have a say in their development.

5. Member States should invest in the collection of gender data. The lack of data disaggregated by sex, age, location, ethnicity, migration status and other factors sets back development efforts because adequate information about who is being left behind is crucial. Investing in efforts to close the massive gender data gap is essential for effective budgeting and policymaking.

6. Member States should address gender-discriminatory norms and stereotypes and gender-based violence. The stigma surrounding menstrual hygiene, stereotypes about women's roles that prevent their participation in the sustainable energy sector and harassment in the streets all limit women's ability to participate in public life and to achieve equality. Strategies to address gender-discriminatory norms and violence must be integrated into policies and programmes established to address each of the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. Member States should value women's time and prioritize the reduction and redistribution of their unpaid work. Whether because of the time spent collecting drinking water, fuelwood or nutritious food or the time spent on public transportation to care for others, women and girls bear the burden of development failures in hours of unpaid work, which in turn limits their prospects for education and employment. Investing in gender-responsive infrastructure, social protection programmes and care services to reduce and redistribute women's and girls' disproportionate burden of unpaid work must be a priority.

8. Member States should use gender budgeting to ensure investments in women and girls. The failure to account for gender in budget allocations hinders the effectiveness of sustainable development programmes. Governments must analyse the gender-differentiated impacts of budgets and allocate money towards achieving clearly defined gender equality targets.

9. Member States should protect women's rights to own and control land, energy and other productive resources. The elimination of discriminatory laws and the

establishment of proactive policies to guarantee women's rights to own and control land and other productive resources are essential across each of the Sustainable Development Goals under consideration.

10. Member States should commit to accountability at all levels, from the local to the global. None of the Sustainable Development Goals will be achieved unless the closure of spaces for civil society at all levels is addressed, women human rights defenders, including environmental defenders, are protected, the presence of women's and feminist groups is ensured at forums for the discussion of accountability and rigorous and transparent reviews are carried out at all levels, including at the high-level political forum.

II. Children and youth

11. The trajectory towards sustainable development remains far from ideal. The transgression of the so-called planetary boundaries and the accumulation of historical inequalities are undermining sustainability and resilience. The current wave of anti-collectivism and globalism is further catalysing such adverse effects. The loss of the resolve to confront historical injustice, as embodied in Agenda 21, hinders the decolonization struggle at the high-level political forum.

12. The displacement of States, neoliberalism, the obsession with growth, the militarization of economies and the rise in the power of transnational corporations have further exhausted the planet's regenerative biocapacity, given dimension to the colonial divide and created unparalleled inequality of wealth between the ultra-rich and everyone else across countries in different stages of development. These trends are undermining the future of young people.

13. The United Nations, in its growing need for funding, is leaning towards the private sector without any accountability mechanisms. A critical turning point has been reached, and the pre-analytical view of society must be re-examined in an ecocidal neocolonial context.

14. In order to align the global architecture with a view to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the children and youth major group emphasizes the points set out below.

15. Water and sanitation is a human right. The rampant privatization of the global common is a primary structural barrier, resulting in sharp price hikes, obscuring responsibility for the provision of water and sanitation and, in some cases, violating the sovereignty of indigenous peoples.

16. The decarbonization of the economy faces barriers, including the artificially high cost of renewable energy systems, false assumptions about nuclear power, stalled divestment from fossil fuels, perverse subsidies and a lack of access to energy-storage technologies.

17. Integrated territorial development is indispensable for the localization of the global agenda. It addresses inequalities between different types of human settlements that result from incumbent power structures and planning paradigms, as well as underlying factors of urban-rural migration and social inequality. Systematic human rights violations of the urban poor embedded in exclusionary urban development policies remain a barrier. The principle of "build back better" should be mainstreamed and risk-informed policy enhanced.

18. An agreement on a universal protocol on plastics is needed, building on the work of the United Nations Environment Assembly. Forests should be given the status of protected global commons.

19. The economy is a subset of society and the environment. Policy approaches should align macroeconomic frameworks with the three dimensions of sustainable development. Concrete initiatives, such as the United Nations Environment Programme's Environmental Risk in Sovereign Credit Analysis project and environmental tax reform programme should be applied universally. The concept of "stranded assets" and the transition from fractional- to full-reserve banking are required to operationalize this paradigm.

20. Achieving universal access to basic services requires that they be delinked from migratory status. The benefits realized by the private sector from undocumented migrants and abusive practices should be highlighted.

21. Gender oppression and inequality remain significant. The inclusion of the voices of girls and young women in all decision-making spaces is essential to overcoming structural barriers that limit their agency.

22. Evidence from various disciplines and sources (formal, informal, traditional, indigenous, etc.) must form the foundation of each stage of the policy cycle. The appropriate application of technology is essential, and anticipatory governance frameworks that ensure technology justice are needed.

23. The high-level political forum should convene discussions on such emerging issues as megacities and shrinking cities, the rights of nature, public ownership of the global commons, ecocide as a crime against humanity, "degrowth" and global regulation of business in line with the discussions of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises at the Human Rights Council.

24. The success of the 2030 Agenda requires greater integration and coherence of the various global frameworks and inputs from the subsidiary bodies and forums of the Economic and Social Council, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, the New Urban Agenda, the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, the Paris Agreement, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum and others.

25. To ensure rights-based participation modalities that provide protected spaces for critical segments of society, the reform process carried out by the high-level political forum should engage major groups and other stakeholders, building on the modalities described in General Assembly resolution 67/290.

III. Non-governmental organizations

26. For the 2030 Agenda to be truly transformative, urgent action is required to restructure global systems and reorient them towards equity and justice. This includes the meaningful and active participation of stakeholders at all stages of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, the non-governmental organizations (NGO) major group calls for a new development paradigm that prioritizes the flourishing of humans, nature and animals. Its proposals specific to the Sustainable Development Goals under consideration at the 2018 high-level political forum are set out below.

27. Recognizing the importance of water, sanitation and hygiene in ensuring human rights, gender equality and peace, the NGO major group calls for a rights-based approach to Goal 6 that prevents the commodification and privatization of water sources and that ensures the transparent, accountable and fair distribution of services;

increases domestic resources and aid for water, sanitation and hygiene services to ensure equitable and affordable access; protects environmental ecosystems that ensure the security of water systems; and strengthens community-based water resource management.

28. To achieve Goal 7 and ensure sustainable energy for all, the NGO major group calls for inclusive, multi-stakeholder collaboration in designing and delivering sustainable energy solutions that protect the environment, cultural heritage and human rights. This includes the scaling-up of investments in renewable energy using innovative approaches to reach energy-poor communities through end-user-oriented energy services that are truly affordable, reliable, safe and sustainable.

29. Recognizing the right of humanity to safe, decent, culturally adequate and resilient living environments, the group calls for the implementation of Goal 11 through inclusive approaches that bring together local, national and international actors, including women and marginalized groups, in urban planning, the expansion of technologies and disaster risk management. Age-, gender- and disability-sensitive and participatory budgeting and planning are key in urban planning and integrated territorial governance.

30. The NGO major group calls for increased political will and action to achieve Goal 12, particularly through the regulation of corporate activity and waste, consumer education and environmental stewardship. Governments have a fundamental role in regulating the private sector and ensuring all-of-society action towards changing consumption and production patterns, moving from an excessive focus on profit and growth to a planet- and people-centred economy.

31. In the context of the ongoing degradation of the ecosystem of the planet, the NGO major group calls for the involvement of civil society, indigenous peoples, women and local communities in coordinated action to achieve Goal 15, in line with biodiversity-related intergovernmental frameworks and targets. States must implement policies and effective enforcement systems to hold extractive and polluting industries accountable, prevent further deterioration, conserve and protect biodiversity and work towards undoing previous damage.

32. The means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, encapsulated in Goal 17, must ensure the availability of the policy space required for Governments to enact regulations, enforcement measures and fiscal measures to advance their democratically owned and rights-based development agendas. The NGO major group demands the overdue introduction of a tax on financial transactions and the establishment of an intergovernmental body for international tax cooperation at the United Nations level. Trade must be organized along principles that support policy space and the rights-based implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the global North must provide at least 0.7 per cent of its gross domestic product in official development assistance, particularly for least developed countries.

33. Noting the "interlinked and indivisible" nature of the 2030 Agenda, the NGO major group calls for a holistic, coherent, multisectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Partnerships among Governments, intergovernmental institutions, research and academic institutions and civil society organizations are critical to gaining the comprehensive perspectives, expertise and resources necessary to fully implement the Agenda, as well as to ensure monitoring, review and accountability. Cross-cutting issues must be addressed through a collaborative approach to enable collective success in furthering the well-being of humans, nature and animals and ensuring a transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies for all.

IV. Local authorities

34. The global development agendas, including the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework, along with United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions, offer an unprecedented opportunity for local and regional governments to contribute to global sustainability. The local and regional governments constituency reaffirms its commitment to those agendas and its political will to turn the global goals into localized objectives, through key alliances with the United Nations system and civil society. As the level of government ultimately responsible for taking concrete action, local and regional governments have a unique role to play.

35. The localization of the Sustainable Development Goals relates to the ways in which local and regional governments can support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda through bottom-up action and the extent to which the Sustainable Development Goals provide a framework for local and urban development policy.

36. The Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments is the primary mechanism for facilitating the engagement of those governments in international processes. The Task Force convened the World Assembly of Local and Regional Authorities, which was a fundamental step in the development of the New Urban Agenda, which is closely linked to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The localization of the global agendas is a powerful driver in ensuring that territories and cities are sustainable, inclusive and able to unite efforts and improve the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals both nationally and globally.

37. Members of the Task Force, such as United Cities and Local Governments and the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, are developing reports to be launched at the high-level political forum in 2018 on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals from the perspective of local and regional governments.

Assessing the status of the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals

38. In the area of awareness-raising, the efforts of international and national networks have succeeded in promoting the engagement of local and regional governments towards the 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, additional tasks remain in mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals across the work of local and regional governments.

39. With respect to the alignment of ongoing plans, local and regional governments were already working on many of the topics covered by the Sustainable Development Goals, thus, understanding how to integrate ongoing actions is crucial.

40. Regarding the strengthening of a territorial approach, capacities need to be improved to address the interconnected effects of the Sustainable Development Goals in an integrated manner over urban and rural areas, strengthening linkages among territories.

41. Concerning the New Urban Agenda as a key enabler of the 2030 Agenda, a focus on the urban and territorial dimension, including such key areas as integrated planning, housing, mobility, pollution and climate change, resilience and culture, can accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

42. With regard to the multilevel governance and monitoring framework, national Governments must conduct open processes to define priorities with local and regional governments. Inclusive dialogue mechanisms can ensure coordination and the use of proper monitoring frameworks, including the comprehensive collection and analysis

of data. This should feed the voluntary national reviews, ensuring that local and regional governments are involved in their preparation.

43. In the areas of financing and means of implementation, adding new modalities requires unlocking funding opportunities for local and regional governments. In order to carry out this ambitious agenda, it is urgent that an enabling environment be created through the establishment of regulatory frameworks and policies to promote the empowerment of local and regional governments, develop programmes and organize capacity-building for local and regional governments.

44. To facilitate the decentralized peer-to-peer exchange of experiences among territories, particularly in less developed countries, international cooperation is crucial in supporting the localization of aid and investments at the local level.

Local and regional government forum

45. The high-level political forum provides a ground-breaking opportunity for the involvement of local and regional governments. The localization of all goals and targets, through the linkage of Goal 11 to the urban and territorial dimensions of the other Goals, is fundamental to ensuring the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

46. The Global Tracking Framework, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and UN-Habitat are organizing the first-ever local and regional government forum within the high-level political forum — a long-standing request of the local and regional government constituency. That opportunity will bring high-level representatives of local and regional governments together to report on the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals in their cities and regions and share messages to improve implementation locally and subnationally.

47. The forum should be recognized as a regular mechanism for involving the local and regional governments major group in the monitoring and reporting processes both globally and regionally. The efforts of local and regional governments to organize, collaborate and deliver informed inputs must be acknowledged as part of the institutional monitoring and reporting processes of the forum.

V. Workers and trade unions

Vision of trade unions with respect to the Sustainable Development Goals

48. The 2030 Agenda is premised on the recognition of the mutual dependence of environmental, economic and social sustainability. Together with the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, it provides the framework for achieving sustainable and resilient societies. The perspective of workers and trade unions is aligned with this holistic vision. A rights-based approach is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. Labour standards must be guaranteed for all. Upholding the freedom of association and collective bargaining rights and supporting social dialogue between workers, organizations representing employers, and Governments as an instrument of governance not only deliver progress for working people and societies at large but also form one of the pillars of a functional democracy.

Just transition to environmentally, socially and economically sustainable energy and production patterns (Goals 7 and 12)

49. The "just transition" is premised on an inclusive approach that brings together workers, communities, employers and Governments in social dialogue to drive the concrete plans, policies and investments needed for a fast and fair transformation to a low-carbon economy. It adopts a rights-based approach to building social protection systems, providing skills training, redeployment, labour market policies and community development. Governments must strengthen their capacity to deliver just transition measures.

Responsible and sustainable investments: quality public services and resource mobilization (Goals 6 and 11)

50. Trade unions highlight the risks associated with the privatization of common goods and public services. In particular, the challenges that public-private partnerships raise with regard to transparency and the limits they impose on access to the goods and services needed to ensure that people are not left behind raise major questions about the capacity of such partnerships to realize the Sustainable Development Goals.

51. Taxes are the most important source of public financing. It is important to note that central Governments have a key role to play in ensuring that local governments have public revenues sufficient to provide high-quality water and sanitation services. As such, sustainable publicly financed water and sanitation systems rely heavily on strong commitments from central Governments.

Responsible and sustainable investments: private finance for public sustainability (Goals 12 and 15)

52. Governments must ensure business accountability, transparency in investments and due diligence throughout global supply chains, as well as addressing problems associated with the operations of offshore finance and tax havens. Corporations must respect human rights, contribute to the formalization of the informal economy, uphold the core labour standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and practise the due diligence prescribed by the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.

53. To do so, Governments should:

(a) Ensure the implementation of labour rights, including freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively, decent wages and social protection;

(b) Commit to supporting social dialogue as a means of implementing the 2030 Agenda and implement, together with social partners, national just transition plans;

(c) Empower local governments to implement just transition measures that can adequately adapt labour market policies to local needs;

(d) Guarantee affordable and quality public services for public transport, energy and water-saving arrangements, health care and sanitation, and quality education;

(e) Implement progressive tax systems capable of supporting the financing of public services;

(f) Ensure business accountability and transparency in investments and due diligence in global supply chains, as prescribed by the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Tripartite Declaration;

(g) Address problems associated with offshore finance and tax havens;

(h) Include labour and environmental clauses in all public procurement actions and ensure transparency and disclosure in public contracts.

VI. Business and industry

54. The business and industry major group reiterates its commitment to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and acknowledges the critical role it must continue to play in accelerating progress towards sustainable development. As a key partner to Governments and other stakeholders in driving inclusive economic growth, the private sector continues to make investments towards the achievement of the Goals, including in the areas of human and institutional capacity-building, project development and accessible and sustainable innovation and deployment.

55. The unprecedented participation of the private sector, as well as Governments and civil society organizations, at the 2017 business forum on the Sustainable Development Goals sent a clear message to the world about the level of engagement of the private sector in accelerating the implementation of the Goals and the commitment of the business and industry major group to playing a key role in driving sustainability, eradicating poverty and creating decent and productive work for all.

56. The private sector is committed to mobilizing its resources and expertise to ensure that policy frameworks and partnerships support the vision of an inclusive, sustainable and prosperous world, as embodied in the 2030 Agenda. To that end, it is hoped that the high-level political forum will provide a platform for constructive and inclusive dialogue between business and government entities on the Sustainable Development Goals.

57. The private sector reiterates its intention to participate in the high-level political forum as an active partner in promoting sustainability by sharing knowledge and providing expertise on the formation and implementation of policy and to engage in partnerships with a lasting impact.

58. The business and industry major group is committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the private sector and stands ready to work with the private sector, Government and all stakeholders to deliver on that commitment.

VII. Scientific and technological community

59. Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals as an integrated set, taking full account of the interdependencies among them, creates opportunities to reframe development, promote policy coherence, create efficiencies, target investments and promote stronger buy-in. Achieving the Goals together as an indivisible whole is not only possible, but is the only way of achieving the Goals.

60. There is a special urgency for acting now on interactions among the Sustainable Development Goals, as recent decisions are locking in unsustainable pathways. Wider coordinated efforts are needed to understand the long-term routes to achieving the Goals and their potential to cut across policy domains, as well as temporal and geographical boundaries.

61. The achievement of sustainable development requires better integration, more coordination and cooperation at an unprecedented scale, including among scientists, policymakers, members of civil society and the private sector.

62. The scientific and technological community has a crucial role to play in providing the evidence, expertise and data to inform, measure and monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

63. Alongside technology, governance, societal norms and values and behavioural changes have a huge role to play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Governance systems need to be changed to better manage complex multidimensional challenges.

64. The high-level political forum offers an opportunity to reflect not only on successes but, importantly, also on challenges in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. This allows for a better learning process and more effective engagement of scientists and stakeholders.

65. Access to safe water for all requires the balancing of demands from many socioeconomic actors, protecting the sources of water and rainfall and enhancing the transparent governance of natural resource management. Water and sanitation systems require integrated and multi-scale management that takes into account changing environmental and social pressures. Access to sanitation is a social and political issue as well as a technical one, with small-scale community dynamics affecting it.

66. While access to modern energy is fundamental to human development, not everyone has enjoyed its benefits. The extraction, conversion and consumption of energy have major impacts on other sectors. Urban policymakers need to tackle simultaneously energy security, sustainability and affordability. There is a need for a long-term approach to science and technology development to scale up low-carbon technologies, especially in developing countries, and address any potential negative impacts on energy prices.

67. By 2030, 60 per cent of the world's population will live in cities. While cities have administrative boundaries, their sustainability is dependent on a much wider area, which supply cities with food, water, energy and consumer goods. The design, density, efficiency and size of cities govern their consumption of natural resources, their ability to provide secure and healthy lives for their inhabitants and their impact on the natural environment surrounding them. A systems approach to urban planning is key to achieving sustainable development.

VIII. Education and academia stakeholder group

68. Free, high-quality education is crucial for breaking cycles of poverty and transforming societies, placing Goal 4 at the heart of the Agenda. The Goals to be reviewed by the high-level political forum in 2018 rely on education for their realization and are at the same time crucial for the realization of Goal 4. Cross-sectoral relationships and interrelated policymaking are necessary, in line with Goal 17. Civil society organizations that work to promote the right to education have recognized this; networks have broadened, and cross-sectoral dialogues are achieving positive change.

69. Progress has been witnessed in some countries in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 4, and in efforts to align targets with national policies and legislation. Efforts to develop follow-up and monitoring mechanisms have taken shape at the national and global levels, as exemplified by the

work described in the *Global Education Monitoring Report* and by the establishment of such accountability mechanisms as the Education 2030 Steering Committee.

70. The financing of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals has proven challenging. Domestic budgets remain insufficient to deliver on Goal 4, and in some cases they have even decreased; reductions in official development assistance have not helped. At the same time, proposals to close the financing gap through loans have been put forward, pointing to a worrying and unfitting return of the debt model. A combination of increased domestic resources, particularly through tax justice mechanisms at the national and international levels, and increased international cooperation are necessary to fully implement the 2030 Agenda. The allocation by Governments of insufficient resources for Goal 4 has given rise to increasing privatization in some countries, with reports of for-profit actors taking advantage of gaps in the provision of public education, undermining the responsibility of the State as the duty bearer for the Agenda.

71. Despite the participatory climate in which the Sustainable Development Goals were developed, the doors have often since closed to civil society, and we have seen cases of the rising criminalization of social protest. Citizens must have their perspectives considered in decision-making and monitoring processes.

72. A further challenge lies in measurement and accountability processes. Civil society can contribute by actively engaging in the debates on indicators and data production, on data transparency and publication and, in some cases, on data collection, including by mobilizing academia. Furthermore, a predominance of attention is being paid to several global education indicators that reduce the assessment of progress towards the Agenda to an examination of test scores, which will not contribute to the successful realization of the ambition to deliver a quality education and, with respect to the full set of Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure a fulfilling life for all.

73. Bottlenecks related to policymaking in the area of education have been identified, including insufficient attention to gender equality; the persistence of violence, conflict and emergency situations; a narrowing of the Goal 4 agenda, associated with a neglect of youth and adult education; and insufficient attention to the conditions and status of teachers.

74. The recommendations of the education and academia stakeholder group include the following:

(a) Credible road maps must be developed for each Sustainable Development Goal; for Goal 4, they must explicitly provide for education that is of high quality, equitable, inclusive and free;

(b) States must deliver on their responsibility to finance the Sustainable Development Goals; for Goal 4, this should be aligned with the Education 2030 Framework for Action;

(c) Educational systems must be supported in responding to the challenges of the future, and human rights, sustainable development and global citizenship should be mainstreamed across curricula, teaching and learning methods and materials, assessment methods, and teacher training and support measures;

(d) Citizen participation in accountability at all levels must be enabled;

(e) Voluntary national reviews should include formal space for reporting by representatives of national civil society organizations.

IX. Persons with disabilities

75. To truly make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, all people must be included, diversity must be celebrated and all must have support for living and being included in cities and human settlements. Resilience is essential for the realization of sustainable development, and to achieve this, those who are the furthest behind, such as persons with disabilities, must be meaningfully included. The 2030 Agenda embodies a commitment to include those furthest behind and to reduce their risks to economic, social and environmental shocks. The Sustainable Development Goals can be realized for persons with disabilities only if implementation is guided by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

76. Globally, persons with disabilities make up 15 per cent of the world's population, 80 per cent of whom live in poverty. Nearly 36 per cent of the global population lacks access to sanitation, and 884 million people, mainly in the poorest communities, lack access to clean drinking water. Thus, approximately 177 million persons with disabilities are adversely affected and lack access to clean water and sanitation. Furthermore, more than half of all persons with disabilities live in towns and cities that are rarely accessible, and this number is estimated to grow to between 750 million and 1 billion by 2030.[1] Linked to this statistic, the global population of people forcibly displaced reached a record 66 million in 2016, with as many as 10 million of them being persons with disabilities.

77. Owing to barriers to taking advantage of the built environment, information and means of communication, persons with disabilities are denied access to basic urban services, including housing, roads, public spaces, transportation, sanitation and water, health care, education, and emergency and disaster response. Yet, it is generally feasible to meet accessibility requirements with 1 per cent of the total cost of a project. The reality is that retrofitting for accessibility is more expensive, costing up to 20 per cent of the original cost compared to integrating accessibility and universal design principles into new buildings. Furthermore, little support and few services exist to enable persons with disabilities and their families to realize their right to live and be included in the community. Even where services exist, they tend to be based on congregate care and too often continue to be segregated and medicalized. Inclusive societies recognize the interdependence of the rights of its members and that to be fully and meaningfully included, one must have access to inclusive education, affordable housing, the right to make decisions and employment.

78. Inclusive, safe, sustainable and resilient societies cannot be defined by bricks and mortar alone, and the degree of inclusiveness is measured not only by the ease of physical access. Inclusive societies must be built on the principles set out in article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, namely, respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons; non-discrimination; full and effective participation and inclusion in society; respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity; equality of opportunity; accessibility; equality between men and women; and respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

[1] Of an estimated 5 billion urban dwellers, 15 to 20 per cent would be ESTIMATED TO BE persons with disabilities. Data sources used: World Health Organization and World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (2011), and the United Nations Population Fund website on urbanization: www.unfpa.org/urbanization.

79. To realize inclusiveness for persons with disabilities, policymakers must be informed by evidence-based data that are disaggregated by disability through the use of a short set of questions developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics and by proper consultations with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations on the design, implementation and monitoring of plans in connection with the Sustainable Development Goals.

X. Volunteer groups

80. Volunteers and their efforts are essential for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The aim of eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity will not be realized without the contributions of millions of properly supported and enabled volunteers.

81. Volunteers extend the reach of Sustainable Development Goal-related services, facilitating access to health, education and other services to some of the poorest, most marginalized and most vulnerable communities, ensuring that no one is left behind.

82. For poor and marginalized people, including indigenous peoples, refugees, people with disabilities and others who are all too often at the margins of society, the opportunity to volunteer is a chance to move from being a passive recipient to an active participant in development processes.

83. Volunteerism is a universal phenomenon, but it does not occur at uniform rates, nor is it uniformly effective. It is strongest when it is recognized and supported.

84. Citizen-led monitoring offers opportunities to collect data at a level that is closer to poor and marginalized people and, when combined with participatory processes, it also has the potential to empower people to realize their rights as citizens.

Goal 6

85. Volunteers are active in ensuring that water sources remain clean by testing samples and clearing waterways of refuse around the world. Volunteers also educate whole communities on proper sanitation practices.

Goal 7

86. Volunteers are installing and maintaining solar panels, repairing infrastructure after disasters, contributing to "bottom of the pyramid" renewable energy improvement projects and developing hydroelectric power schemes to make renewable energy accessible.

Goal 11

87. Sustainable cities are active cities filled with volunteers and volunteer-driven non-governmental organizations. Millions are involved in environmental volunteering, farming, building new and inclusive technology, actively educating each other, advocating and lobbying local and national Governments and more. Furthermore, millions of volunteers act as first responders during natural and other disasters, working to safeguard neighbours and help them to recover quickly.

Goal 12

88. Volunteers are consumers, workers and concerned contributors. They are crucial in efforts to lobby companies to improve production practices and are at the forefront in educating consumers about how the goods they purchase are sourced and produced to ensure that scarce resources are not squandered.

Goal 15

89. Volunteers are crucial to ensuring that the natural environment is well cared for. India set a world record in 2017 by planting 66 million trees on one day, made possible through the work of 1.5 million volunteers.

90. In Lebanon, a unique collaboration between the United Nations, local government, the private sector and volunteers resulted in 2,000 volunteers planting 5,000 cedar trees, part of a plan in which volunteers will be instrumental in planting 40 million trees by 2030.

91. The volunteer groups recommend that the high-level political forum:

(a) Formally recognize the contribution of volunteering to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the voluntary national reviews of Member States;

(b) Ensure that volunteer groups are fully recognized and supported in the national plans and strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda;

(c) Note the commitment of volunteer groups to sharing in accountability for the realization of the Goals;

(d) Follow the lead of Member States by affirming their full support for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/290, which supports the participation of non-governmental actors;

(e) Ensure that data for monitoring progress towards the Goals are captured through participatory processes and that they include the perspectives of the most marginalized voices, as well as the volunteers who work closely with them;

(f) Ensure that the accountability, transparency and review framework for the Goals involves community consultation at all levels, including with the most marginalized groups, as well as the volunteers who work closely with them.

XI. Older persons

92. In 2015, 58 per cent of the population aged 60 and over resided in urban areas, up from 50 per cent in 2000. Over half the ageing population, 289 million, lives in low- and middle-income countries, and is increasingly concentrated in urban areas. Older persons are the fastest-growing population group globally, reaching 22 per cent by 2050, and their numbers in cities are expected to increase.

93. Implementing "age-friendly" cities is central to the aim of Goal 11, to make cities and human settlements "inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". Older age can increase vulnerability in urban areas.[2] The age-friendly cities approach optimizes

[2] World Health Organization, *Global Report on Urban Health: Equitable, Healthier Cities for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

"opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age."[3]

94. Such an approach aligns with the New Urban Agenda, which calls for age-, gender- and disability-sensitive strategies and for the pledge of Governments to leave no one behind as they implement the 2030 Agenda.

95. This pledge requires States Members of the United Nations to take a rights-based, life-course approach to urban planning in which the active participation of all, including older persons, is solicited.

96. Challenges facing ageing populations in rapidly urbanizing environments include, but are not limited to, inadequate food and shelter, lack of access to water and sanitation, higher risk for infectious and chronic diseases, income insecurity, poverty and social exclusion.

97. Age-related physical and mental health issues, including impaired vision, hearing loss and other functional impairments, present unique challenges for older urban dwellers, which can inhibit their use of public transportation and public spaces, limit opportunities for social and economic contributions and lead to social exclusion and isolation.

98. Significant barriers to the realization of older urban dwellers' rights to health, participation and social inclusion include income insecurity, inadequate access to age-appropriate health and care services and greater gender inequality in older age. The impact of chronic diseases and air pollution on health and mortality in urban areas is greater for the very old and the very young.

99. The lack of adequate age- and gender-disaggregated data is a significant challenge to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 11. The recently created Titchfield group on ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data must take account of different experiences of ageing in urban and rural environments.

100. Inclusive design models, such as intergenerational innovations in living arrangements and the use of universal design in building, benefit all generations and respect the rights and enhance the unique contributions of older persons.

101. Appropriate urban development can mitigate the risk factors of ageing in cities and support the contributions of older persons to civic life by enhancing their participation and recognizing their roles as voters, workers, taxpayers, citizens and immigrants. Older persons who are actively involved in their communities play unique roles in maintaining the social cohesion of families and neighbourhoods. They are employees, caregivers, volunteers and bearers of historical memory who transmit wisdom, traditions and culture to future generations. Older women especially provide vital (unpaid) care and support for spouses, children, grandchildren and other, often older, relatives, especially those with disabilities and dementia.

102. Municipal-level governments can play key roles in harnessing the energy of the collective action and potential of older urban populations to lead policy changes that support national Governments' achievement of Goal 11 targets. Progress on Goal 11 is linked to progress on Goals 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16 and 17.

[3] Ibid., *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide*, 2007.

XII. Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism

103. Three years after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, the gap between the aspirations expressed in the 2030 Agenda and reality are growing — wealth inequality is rising; more people are being dispossessed of land, productive resources, livelihoods and natural resources, pushing them to the threshold of poverty; and more women and defenders of human rights and the environment face oppression, intimidation, threats and marginalization across the globe.

104. In relation to the theme of the high-level political forum, "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies", there is an urgent need to redefine resilience against the backdrop of development justice. In particular:

(a) Resilience must be redefined in view of the increased vulnerability of rural and urban communities due to poverty and the violation of human rights by State and non-State actors and in view of the erosion of livelihoods and habitats and the violation of the right to lands and territories experienced by women, indigenous peoples and local and poor communities that are dependent on natural resources; while the resilience of migrants is celebrated, the reality that it actually forces them to endure exploitative conditions is ignored;

(b) The definition of resilience must take into consideration the existence of unequal power structures at the global and regional levels in aid and trade policies, which increasingly favour powerful countries and multinational corporations at the expense of the peoples;

(c) Resilience requires polycentric governance that ensures the broad participation of stakeholders and rights holders, genuine consultations with and the participation of peoples and the acceptance of the importance of both scientific knowledge and the traditional and local knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and other marginalized groups, who are also agents of change;

(d) Increasing resilience requires the integration of women's rights and human rights and the provision of space for environmental defenders, many of whom are being targeted for their exemplary commitments to the people and the planet.

105. Unless the systemic barriers leading to conflicts and human rights violations, namely, the grabbing of land and resources, unjust trade and investment agreements, corporate hegemony, patriarchy, fundamentalism, militarism and conflict, and the rise of patriarchal authoritarian governance, are addressed, sustainable and resilient societies will never be achieved.

106. The Goals under review during the high-level political forum are intrinsically linked, and a holistic approach should be taken. Governments should move away from narrow sectoral approaches, progressing towards fully cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation; Governments must properly map and plan policy coherence to ensure institutional coherence.

107. The unrestrained promotion of public-private partnerships and blended finance poses threats to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and should be assessed against the genuine spirit of development. Governments should strengthen their resolve and enforce a strong and binding legal framework to regulate the private sector. Member States must also ensure that the private sector upholds the highest standards of human rights, international labour standards, transparency and accountability. Governments should engage more with small enterprises, as well as community and social enterprises, grass-roots communities, underrepresented constituencies and groups at

risk in all platforms related to the Sustainable Development Goals in national, regional and international advocacy.

108. To strengthen implementation, developed countries are called upon to meet more than their official development assistance commitments, and the call for an assessment of the compatibility of all trade and investment agreements with and their impact on the Sustainable Development Goals is reiterated. It is recommended that a transparent, accountable, adequately resourced intergovernmental tax body with universal membership be created to lead global deliberations on international tax cooperation under the auspices of the United Nations. To strengthen accountability, linkages between the 2030 Agenda and international human rights mechanisms should be strengthened. Reports of civil society organizations, together with United Nations human rights documents, must be officially recognized by the high-level political forum. Governments should adopt people-driven accountability frameworks, including the collection of people-centric data, to ensure effective and inclusive development.

XIII. Together 2030

109. The diverse challenges and interlinked uncertainties of globalization and climate change demand that societies become ever more flexible so as to be able to withstand crises, reinventing themselves in resilient, integrated, sustainable, multidimensional and inclusive ways. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the importance of this approach, and the theme of the high-level political forum presents an opportunity to go beyond the identification of challenges towards a discussion of concrete, collective and funded action that moves societies to be more sustainable, inclusive and resilient.

110. In order to achieve that objective, countries must cooperate in addressing systemic and overlapping inequalities in wealth distribution, gender, income, disability, age and indigeneity or ethnicity. National and local governments should adopt a human rights-based approach to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular with respect to those currently under review.

111. Member States, however, need to reaffirm that, as part of the 2030 Agenda, voluntary national reviews of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals should respect their universal, integrated and interrelated nature and the three dimensions of sustainable development. Accordingly, in carrying out their voluntary national reviews, Member States should reflect on the implementation of all of the Goals and on their interlinkages. The thematic reviews of a small set of Goals, undertaken during the first segment of the high-level political forum, should not dictate or minimize the scope of the voluntary national reviews.

112. Moreover, voluntary national reviews are not a substitute for national processes. Instead, they should be viewed as opportunities to build national and subnational dialogues and mechanisms on implementation and offer a learning space among all stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement in the voluntary national review process, through the appropriate representative and self-organized civil society coordination mechanisms at the national level, should be encouraged before, during and after the high-level political forum. In addition, national indicator frameworks should be developed to reflect the whole agenda, especially the need to be inclusive of non-economic measures.

113. It is strongly recommended that additional time be allocated at the high-level political forum for interventions of major groups and other stakeholders, especially national civil society platforms and alliances from reporting countries, in order to

allow for more inclusive and participatory engagement, to better listen to the experience of the poorest, most marginalized and disadvantaged persons from voluntary national review countries and to promote more meaningful exchanges with Member States. It is also recommended that the programme of work of the high-level political forum include spaces for stakeholders to provide more detailed feedback on the voluntary national reviews presented by their countries and to share their own contributions to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, for example through the conduct of parallel reviews.

114. For the specific goals under review in 2018, there is a common need for a greater focus on the integration of policy agendas and cross-ministerial cooperation, as well as mechanisms to include in planning processes the voices of the poorest and most marginalized. In addition:

(a) Regarding Goal 6, a greater emphasis needs to be placed on open and transparent financing, recognizing the return on investment in water, sanitation and hygiene (every $1 invested returns $4 in economic benefit);

(b) Goal 7 should be seen as an enabler of other development goals, especially gender equality and women's empowerment;

(c) Regarding Goal 11, there is a need to focus on the equitable use of cities, with a rights-based approach to housing and services in cities and to more fully recognize the social and ecological function of land;

(d) Regarding Goal 12, all countries should commit to the adoption of ISO 20400 on sustainable procurement, including it as a tool for the implementation of best practices in the allocation of foreign aid;

(e) Regarding Goal 15, ecosystem-based policy solutions should be based on the affirmation that the right to a safe, healthy and ecologically balanced environment is a human right in itself.